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DYING FROM STARVATION

RED RUSSIA

BY

JOHN FOSTER FRASER

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RED RUSSIA.

CHAPTER I.

GAIETY AND TRAGEDY HAND IN HAND.

The "Bear" at Night—A Scene of Merriment—The Company—The Tartar Waiters—The Band—"God Bless Our Noble Czar"—An Insulted Student—Retaliation and Murder—Russian Callousness—Another Scene: the Flogging of Anna Smirnoff—The Case of Mario Spiridonoff.

THE "Bear" Restaurant in St. Petersburg holds much the same place among Russians as does the Savoy Restaurant among Londoners.

It is at night, when ordinary folk are seeking their candles and going to bed, that the "Bear" blazes with effulgence. Droshkies clatter over the heavy cobbles which pave the streets, and deliver at the great doorway burdens of fair women in the radiance of evening toilette. Their escorts are officers of the Czar, straight, well-built, well-groomed men in the rich blue-grey garb of their regiments. The sword-straps are of gold, and the sword hangs straight by the leg, the Blücher boots of daintiest leather, of neat shape, japanned, and for drawing-room rather than field wear.

In a marble tank swim fish brought from the Volga. They are black and lively, and beloved by the gourmet. Ladies, tall and dark, rest their elbows on the edge of the marble, and watch the capering of the fish. Officers laugh and invite them to make their choice. A lady thinks she will have the fish that seems to be playing leap-frog with its fellow. It is netted, and there is mirth at the wriggling. It is off to the kitchen, and in half an hour will be served as part of a light-hearted woman's supper.

The restaurant is a crash of merriment. It is nearing midnight, and fashionable Petersburg has awakened into life. It seems half the men are in uniform—for in Russia the soldiers of the Emperor never lay aside the garb of their trade. Maltese crosses dangle from many a breast buttonhole, telling of fruitless service on the sodden plains of Manchuria.

A chocolate-faced, smirking, slit-eyed, crop-headed Japanese moves down the circle between many tables. He is in evening dress, and bows and shakes hands and puts his hand over his heart and bows again—for no foreigner is more popular in the capital of Russia to-day than the Japanese. There is no enmity in the heart of the Russian that the little, ill-shaped people of the Far East should have overthrown the big Muscovite in combat.

Here and there are visitors from the Embassies, the younger men mostly, second and third secretaries, some day, perhaps, to be Ambassadors in far other lands, perhaps in Russia itself. There is the heavy German, the talkative, gesticulating French-

man, the handsome, dignified Austrian, the effeminate, perfumed, moustache-twirling Italian. At a side table, clean shaven, slim, and athletic, are a couple of unmistakable Englishmen, one a secretary from Britain's great Embassy on the Quay, and overlooking the busy waters of the Neva, and the other a King's messenger, who has arrived this morning with despatches from London.

Wealthy Russian civilians and their ladies are in the midst of a gay meal. Champagne is flowing freely. There is colour on the cheeks, there are gleams in the eye. To the Englishman the jollity is a little too boisterous.

The air is hazy with smoke, for the Russian men and women have puffed the little *paperos* between the courses.

At one table is a group of men who have finished their meal, have their elbows on the tables, are seasoning one another with cigar smoke—rather *blasé* men, who have been everywhere and seen everything, who have good reason to be cynics concerning the world—the special correspondents from London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, New York.

Among the throng move the waiters, quick, stealthy men, with Mongolian features—Tartars every one. They are the descendants of the horde of the Golden Khan which centuries ago roamed westwards over the Ural mountains, and looked like taking possession of Europe. Here are some of their long-lined sons—giving their services as waiters in a fashionable restaurant, in return for tips from prodigal Russians.

Behind a maze of palms is a red-cöated Austrian band. There is double-dosed Wagner music by Strauss; there is the rhapsodical, weird Tschaïkowsky; there is the rag-time of a transatlantic cake-walk tune. The Russians show most appreciation of the cake-walk tune.

And this is the capital of the Czar, where revolution is rife, and "politicals" are seized at dead of night by the secret police, and whirled off in the darkness to—who knows where?—and bombs are being manufactured in back rooms.

Amid all the laughter and merry-making the thought seems absurd. Everybody is seeking pleasure, and the outside world counts for nothing.

Only at one table are politics talked—where the brethren of the newspapers are. They discuss high personages with freedom, and in a way which would make some folks' hair stand on end, and their scalps feel like goose-flesh, if only they could be heard. And they tell stories of secret happenings in the Russian underground political world which they never write because they are too awful to be believed.

It is midnight. The band bursts forth with the sweeping, dignified staves of "God Bless Our Noble Czar."

There is a springing to the feet, a hoisting of glasses. If your eye is quick you note that some of the civilians, though they stand and lift their glasses, are cold in demeanour, and do not even damp their lips.

But the military men are flushed with champagne, and they are very loyal. They cheer. They

MARIE SPIRIDONOFF.

insist on the national hymn again. Once more they demand it, and once more. Their blood is warm.

A young man, pale, with the features of a student, dressed as a student, looks upon the soldiers with a smile of disdain. He has one knee resting on the seat of his chair.

"Stand up, you ——" a wine-soaked officer bawls with wrath. He hurls a foul insult upon the mother of the student.

The student stiffens and quivers, and all the blood goes from his countenance. It is not from you I take my manners," he replies.

The officer heeds not. He is laughing with his ladies. Everybody sits down, and the band swings into a coon song tune; there are impatient cries for more champagne, heavily iced, and in silver buckets; the Tartar waiters scurry, and the riot of Russian gaiety breaks loose.

The student has ashen features, and his eyes are fixed like steel on the officer. A lady with the student is quietly, earnestly, talking to him. He pays no attention. His gaze is fixed.

Occasionally the eyes of the two men meet, those of the student piercing and cold, those of the soldier tauntingly scornful.

An hour goes. The officer rises to conduct one of his ladies to her carriage. The student rises and follows him.

In the hall, by the marble tank, where a few fish are still sporting, he suddenly faces the officer, raises his arm and gives a blow on the side of the ear.

The retort comes quick—a drawn revolver and a shot.

The student turns, walks quickly back to the restaurant. Behind him, features distorted by passion, hastens the officer with revolver still in his fist.

Nigh everybody is too busy with merriment to notice the pair.

"Look what this blackguard has done," exclaims the student. He half raises his arm, and shows a hand dripping with blood.

Bang! Another shot has been fired. The student groans and sinks in a heap.

Bang! Bang again! Once more bang! The soldier empties his revolver into the body of the dead man.

Some women shriek. But the band is busy, and laughter is loud, and people in distant parts of the room mistake the shots for popping corks.

The man is dead! The lady who is with him bends over him and sobs.

The murderer stands defiant. The manager approaches him. The Prefect of Police must be called; he must not leave till he comes. The soldier makes no sign except to put away his revolver and sit down.

Blood is running freely from the dead man and making a pool about the carpet. One or two ladies, nervous and pale, go away. Others turn in their chairs and look. Really a very unpleasant sight, and likely to spoil the evening!

The Tartar waiters bring a long tablecloth. They spread the cloth and hide It from sight.

And now let jollity continue. The band plays a waltz. "*Champanski!*" is the order. Again come the tinkle of woman's laughter, the guffaws of well-fed men.

Little notice is taken of the Thing lying beneath the tablecloth—save by the woman who is kneeling and softly sobbing.

What is it in the Russian nature which makes such callousness? Such an occurrence in the Savoy Restaurant would send everybody home. But among the Russians—tut, *they* haven't been killed; why should they bother?

It is the law in Russia that nobody touch a corpse till the Prefect of Police arrives. An hour goes before he comes. Casual interest is shown in his arrival. He arrests the murderer. As the two walk towards the door, eyes follow them. Suddenly a civilian springs to his feet. He seizes a full champagne bottle and crashes it on the head of the murderer. It tears the scalp; blood and champagne drip down the uniform.

"Bravo!" shout civilians in the room.

On with the merry-making. Another rag-time, cake-walk tune! "*Champanski!*"

Thus revelry riots in the capital of the land rife with revolution. Whatever there be to-morrow, let this night be jovial. The "Bear" does not close till four o'clock in the morning.

* * * * *

A very different scene!

The days early draw dark in St. Petersburg. Sleet and rain, and the streets are greasy and foul. There

has been one of those sporadic revolutionary demonstrations—marching through the streets waving red banners, chanting the "Marseillaise."

Mounted troops appear. In the mirk of the afternoon they charge the mob, and the mob runs. There are women and children about, and the soldiers cut at them.

"You brutes," screeches a young woman; "you are brave when you have defenceless women to fight. You were not so courageous when you had the Japanese before you."

She is surrounded, thonged, and arrested. She is marched to the barracks with officers about her. In the yard of the barracks appears General Prince ——.

"What has the woman done?" he asks.

"She has insulted the Army," is the reply.

"Then let her be flogged, now, here, in the open, and naked."

Instantly the clothes are ripped from the woman. Not a shred is left upon her. She stands naked, as God made her, before the jeering officers and soldiers, in the dim light and bitter cold. She is flogged before them all.

People in St. Petersburg know well the name of the woman to whom this brutal indignity was offered. It is Anna Smirnoff.

* * * * *

There is a young woman, well reared and refined, named Marie Spiridonoff, in the chill north of Siberia. She belonged, as a great many of the better class and educated young women of Russia

belong, to the revolutionary party. Over ardent, but stung by the ill-treatment and misery of those about her, she determined on the removal of a provincial-town Governor, whose harshness had brought bitterness and venom into many hearts. She dressed herself as a boy, knotted her hair under a student's cap. She encountered the Governor on the platform of a railway station and shot him dead.

So much was recounted in the newspapers at the time. The rest of the story has now to be told.

Following the assassination, she was grabbed by the soldiery. In the struggle her hair fell loose. Instead of being taken in custody, she was seized by the hair and viciously hauled about the platform.

The gendarmes took her to the barracks. Oh, a woman dressed as a man; or a man pretending to be a woman? Identity must be assured.

It was dead winter—and the cold in Russia is not gentle. In a bare, icy barrack room the clothes were torn from her. The officers stood around, wrapped in their heavy coats, and smoking cigarettes. Marie Spiridonoff cowered before their leers, and trembled till her flesh was blue with the icy temperature.

"Cold, eh?" was the question of an officer, who thought it a mighty joke to press the lighted end of his cigarette upon the nipple of her breast.

She screamed.

A splendid joke. To make her squirm and jump and cry out from the pain was a pleasantry. They

burnt her breasts with their cigarettes. They—they did things with their smouldering cigarettes which no pen could write.

The prisoner was sent some distance to be tried. Stark naked she was put into a freight waggon along with two big, brutal, drunken Cossacks to guard her. During the long, cold, and cruel night journey she was subjected to the hellish caresses of those monsters, and to-day is the victim of an awful disease in consequence. One night those officers were shot dead. Her friends had avenged her.

Marie Spiridonoff received her sentence—imprisonment for life in Siberia.

But her story became known: what she had dared and what she had suffered. She was a heroine. The authorities tried to get her through to Siberia in secret. They failed. Soldiers were employed at the stations to keep back the demonstrating crowds.

The end of the train journey was at Irkutsk, the commercial capital of Siberia. There are many railway employés there. They decided on giving Marie Spiridonoff a welcome. The authorities forbade them, and called out the troops. There was the prospect of a riot. Anyway, the workmen let it be clearly understood that if they were not allowed to greet the woman they would tear up the railway line. The authorities yielded.

When the prison train arrived there were thousands of people to cheer. The van in which the young woman travelled was smothered in flowers. Marie Spiridonoff, pale and worn, smiled at the

ovation. Then she sank down, hid her face in her hands, and wept.

She is now imprisoned in the wastes of Yakutsk. She has bidden good-night to the world. Already she is beginning to be forgotten. For tragedies in Russia press hurriedly on one another in these days.

CHAPTER II.

IN ST. PETERSBURG.

A Break in the Dulness—M. Stolypin's Escape—Not Murder, but Politics—Cynicism—The Suppression of the Duma—The View of the Intelligent Foreigner—A Land of Extremes—The Government and Reform—The Soul of St. Petersburg—A Sombre City—Society—A Population in Uniform.

APPARENTLY things were normal in St. Petersburg. So said I to the Russian: "Friends in England think I am hazarding my life here. I did expect something lively in the way of disorder. A week I've been searching for the Revolution, and the nearest I've seen is a gendarme quarreling with a droshki-driver for being on the wrong side of the street. I find St. Petersburg offensively dull. I am glad when the English newspapers arrive, so my appetite for sensation may be tickled."

Said the Russian to me: "So! I also read. It is shocking, the news. Two columns—horrible! Some policemen are killed in Warsaw. A bomb is —what you say?—exploded at Odessa. Some Jews are beaten. A quarrel and then a man shot. Peasants burn a house. There are street fights. All these things you put together in your newspapers. Two columns—horrible! People in foreign countries think all Russia ablaze. Forget they

THE NEVSKI PROSPECT· IN ST· PETERSBURG.

Russia is a big—what you say?—vast country, over one hundred million people. Yet all news of bad men put together, and you think it very dangerous country. What you say if we print—what you call it?—lynching of negroes in America, and insist all white people are massacring all blacks? What you say if in strike fight in England Russian papers tell Lord Campbell-Bannerman give the money to defeat Keir Hardie Anarchist party? Sare, it is sill-ee!"

Two hours later, as I lazily sip absinthe in a café on the Nevski—the Regent Street of St. Petersburg—and watch the throngs of people, chattering, unconcerned with dire events, officers and civilians promenading with their ladies—decorated colonels, podgy Hebrews, grimy *moudjiks*, frisky, merry students—there comes the swift news of a bomb thrown into the house of M. Stolypin, the Minister of the Interior; a score of innocents torn to death. There is no excitement.

"Is he killed?"

"No; he was only splashed with ink; but the man by his side had his head blown off; his daughter's feet are torn off; his son injured; everybody in the room where the bomb fell a mass of unrecognisable matter."

"Humph! A splash of ink. God must be an anti-revolutionist. But they'll have him before they've done. Oh, yes; Stolypin is a nice, an honourable man. But then——" a shrug of the shoulders.

People are apathetic. Here there are whispered regrets the bomb did not do its intended work.

A Russian lady, travelled, middle-aged, refined, says to me: "It is a pity the poor people are killed. But somebody must suffer. I am sorry Stolypin was not killed." She sips her tea.

"But you don't believe in foul murder of this sort?" I exclaim.

"Oh, but that isn't murder," she replies softly. Then she adds with a smile: "You foreigners never can understand our country. That is politics. In England you argue and you vote. Here the Government are brutal; the only answer is to be brutal to the Government. Killing is the only argument the Government understand. Please, please don't look so shocked. Anyway, it failed."

"But the poor folks who have suffered?" I sigh.

"Yes, yes it is a pity; but what do they count among so many millions who live and suffer?"

And the conversation shifts.

There was little change in the demeanour of the crowd; a momentary interest such as you see among a London street-crowd when a cab-horse tumbles—casual, and followed by apathy.

And unless one was conversing with a red-hot, emotional revolutionist, I found it hard in St. Petersburg to meet anyone who did not regard with cynicism the drift of events.

Revolts of soldiery; yes! Anti-Semite demonstrations and bludgeoning; yes! Bomb throwing and shootings; yes! Waving the red flag, inflammatory speeches, and talk of paralysing trade; oh,

M. STOLYPIN'S VILLA AFTER THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION.

yes! Yet all these things are melodrama, and do not concern them very much.

When the Emperor with a swift blow suppressed the Duma the outer world received a political shock—like a Pacific coast earthquake.

So the die had been cast! It was war to the death between Autocracy and Democracy! The Russian masses would rise like a wrathful horde! There was the customary parallel with the French Revolution; the Reign of Terror was to be trifling compared with the inevitable massacres in Russia.

The only part of the world which was not agitated by the abolition of the Duma was Russia itself. Disturbance was expected; troops were brought into the city.

"But I never knew anything fall so absolutely flat," said an Ambassador at whose table I was lunching. "A general strike was called, but it fizzled out. I know at one works the men left the factory with reluctance, but in dread of the revolutionary leaders. Soon as they saw the Government had the upper hand they quietly went back to their employment."

That the Duma was impossible is the opinion held by the "intelligent foreigner" in St. Petersburg. Its members were sincere men; zealous for the well-being of Russia. But they were ignorant of the machinery of Government. It was like the English Trade Union Congress or the Conference of Head Teachers taking possession of the Houses of Parliament at Westminster and endeavouring to run the British Empire. The Duma drifted to talk

on the sacred rights of humanity—a worthy [illegible] but it sailed past practicabilities into the [illegible] the clouds.

And whilst the professors delivered [illegible] speeches on the advantages of enlightened [illegible] tionalism the revolutionaries used the Duma to propound social democratic and republican theories. They felt they were free from the cruel thongs of oppressive autocracy. At one jump they desired to be in the van of democratic countries. They were going to show the old world how a free people should live.

The blessed, though rather namby-pamby, thing called "compromise" is not understood in Russia. It is a land of violent extremes. The bureaucrats, their brains soaked in officialism—men trained in the belief that any critic of authority is a danger to his country—looked upon that mouthing monster, the Duma, as the creation of the devil. The glib Dumaists, with prattle about the rights of men, were convinced the bureaucrats had hatred toward their countrymen, and would rather kill than be kind. As a matter of fact, there was a considerable length of road along which both might have travelled if either had had the sense to seek points of agreement.

But they belonged to different classes. Their upbringing was antagonistic; they met determined on a trial of strength.

While the Duma talked and the Government were impotent, the administration of law throughout the Empire was at a practical standstill. The

Russians, even if disillusioned concern-
n [illegible]duma, had no increased love for the
The revolutionaries made anarchistic
r[illegible] sun of confusion shone. Authority
[illegible] So the final point was not whether
[illegible] be autocratic or democratic govern-
ment, but whether there should be any government at all? And it was to maintain government—be it good or bad—that the Duma was closed down.

The Government promise to initiate reforms. But the Constitutionalists—and right down the gamut of innumerable parties till you get to the anarchist traffickers in gore—just laugh. They have such a long experience of Government promises of well doing! All have ended in nothing. They remind you that in the struggle not a single point has been yielded by the Government except as a sequel to strikes, wreckage, bomb throwing. In constitutionalism the Government deal with a medium they do not understand and which they suspect. They have ever bungled, promised, grown nervous, drawn back, until they were jogged into concession by a bomb.

St. Petersburg, however, is not typically Russian. It is cosmopolitan, with an extra German flavouring. It is European—Russia is really Asiatic. As a city it has not an attractiveness which grips you instantly. It is sprawling, gaunt, grey. Its streets are wide, and most of them are as straight as in an American town. Its buildings are heavy, dour, forbidding. Its squares are just expanses of loneliness.

The summer is short and sultry; The seasons are blusterous, sleety, foggy, ing; its winters are long, dread, lead times the sun rips the cloudy fall, and wind scatters the shreds, and the snow-bound first city of Russia glistens like a jewel beneath a cloudless sky, and the cold is so strong that the mercury in the thermometer never ventures from its bulb.

It is a city with a frown. Sometimes you are deluded into the thought there is a smile of happiness. You stand on a bridge overlooking the Neva. The easterly wind catches the water and blows it into spray; the sun makes cracked mirrors of the waves. There is dignity about the big, square palaces where live the Ambassadors. There are thousands of pedestrians tramping their various ways; there is the clatter of innumerable droshki wheels over the cobbled ways. Like balls and spears of gold glint the domes and spires of the churches of Holy Russia. For a moment it comes to you that St. Petersburg has an amiability of its own; it shows that smile of content and self-satisfaction which seems to rest on all European capitals.

But the thought goes quicker than it came. Over the water you see a band of heavy stone walls; peering above is a green-roofed cupola, and then slender and straight, like a sword raised on high, is the glisk of a spire. That is the dread fortress of Peter and Paul. Into its dungeons have dropped many men and many women, robbed in the night from their families on suspicion of playing traitor

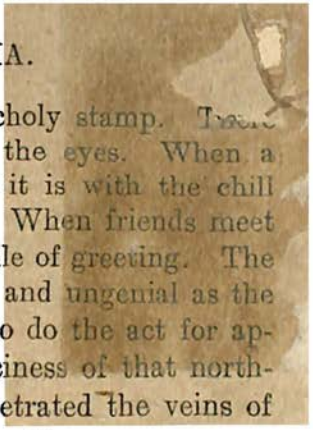
. The clang of the closing gates has
dieu to the world, for they are heard of

is the rat-rat-rumble of kettle drums, and
along come a squad of grey-coated Russian soldiers
—stodgy, slouching men, well-nurtured young fellows of the *moudjik* class, torn from villages in distant provinces to give the best four years of their lives as fighting men for the Czar. They are sullen of countenance. You look into the faces of the passers-by. There is no mirth, no light-heartedness; no lips are opened in casual song. The quick impression is that everybody is returning from an unpleasant interview with somebody else.

In time you come to see that St. Petersburg and its inhabitants are concomitant parts of a whole. You understand that the city has personality, and that it is sombre. The day arrives when you feel, indefinable but unmistakable, the soul of St. Petersburg. It is sad.

I have taken walks along most of the principal streets in the world. A passing throng is like a kaleidoscope; it is ever varying in colour. There are the old and the young, the grave and the gay, the rich and the poor, and on their countenances flickers the animation of life, of desire, of greed, of good spirits.

There is nothing of the kaleidoscope among the thousands who make the Nevski Prospect their promenade each afternoon. You see people of different ages and in different garb. But you never miss the stolid phlegmatic sameness from the faces.



They all bear the same melancholy stamp. There is no laughter, no sparkle in the eyes. When a man raises his hat to another it is with the chill formality of a military salute. When friends meet and shake hands there is no smile of greeting. The handshakes are as unemotional and ungenial as the handshakes of two enemies who do the act for appearance sake. Some of the iciness of that northern latitude seems to have penetrated the veins of the Petersburgers.

It is not the low temperature which is responsible for the frigid demeanour of the people. It is the official environment, the mutual suspicion, the never absent thought that, suddenly, in the dead of night, disaster will fall. Siberia is a long way from St. Petersburg.

Society is divided into two camps, those who are in official circles, and those who are not. They are like two antagonistic armies. The officials regard those who wear no uniform as of inferior metal; plain clothes people look upon officials as vampires. The hatred is covered, smothered, but it is there all the time. In one class is the Oriental love of power, of high-handed dominance, of rule by rigour, even brutality. When the Russian dons a uniform he, almost unconsciously, proceeds to tyrannise those within his reach. He is servile to those who may give him a blow; he is autocratic to those within his power. It is a racial trait, and not individual wickedness. Whilst those of the civilian class hate the man in uniform, they love the uniform itself. It signifies power, authority, and

THE FORTRESS OF PETER AND PAUL.

whilst the educated head of the Russian, the brain tinctured with European ideas, rebels, the Asiatic soul of the man admires.

In no city in the world do you see such a uniformed populace as in St. Petersburg. From the Emperor himself to the toddling schoolboy five years of age, everybody who has the frailest excuse is in uniform. Never is the Czar seen out of uniform. Never do officers of the army put away their swords. University professors carry dirks by their side. The telegraph operator wears a distinctive cap. All engineers in Government employ show a badge of their occupation. Schoolgirls don distinctive aprons. All droshki drivers have the same quaint, low-crowned hat, and wear the same wool-padded, swaddling overcoat. You call on an official, and you find him in a garb which might pass for evening dress; he always wears it when on duty. Clerks in government offices have a uniform. Amongst the working classes yardmen and porters indicate by brass badges and red shirts what their calling is. The heart of the Russian hungers for uniform.

Much of the political trouble in Russia is due to the fact there are not sufficient Government uniformed posts to go round. When a man tries and fails to secure a post under Government, he comes to the conclusion the Government is rotten, and requires fundamental change so it can be representative of the people.

CHAPTER III.

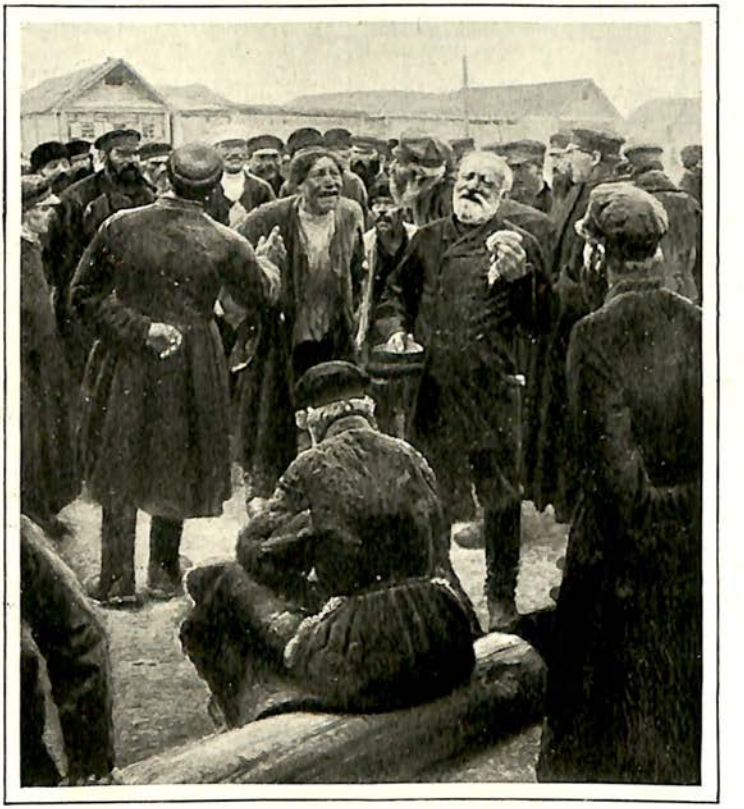
THE GIST OF THE MATTER.

The One Point of Certitude—Fallacy of the Argument from Britain to Russia—Difficulty of getting at the Truth—Corruption—The Bureaucracy—The Czar between Two Fires—The "Intelligents"—Futility of the Government's Tactics towards them—The Jews—Views of a Distinguished Russian—The Government's One Weapon—The Peasantry—The New Duma—The Coming Tragedy.

SITTING in a London club, it is easy enough to exclaim—after reading the newspapers about unrest in Russia, the assassinations, the brutality of the soldiers, the crime and increasing anarchy—"The people must be given their freedom. The Czar will have to cease his autocracy and dismiss his bureaucrats. Let Russia have a parliament like England, and then all will be well."

But in Russia the more one struggles to see the way to peace the more confused and darkened is the path. With the best intent in the world I endeavoured to disentangle the complexities in that sad land. I felt, however, the tangle was becoming worse, and sometimes I was in despair as to where the end of the skein leads.

Only one thing was absolutely sure—that the present system of Government in Russia must end.



POLITICS.

(From the Painting by S. A. Korovine, Galérie Trétiakoff.)

But whether it will be next year, or ten years hence, it would be foolish to prophesy. And when it does—well, there lies the greatest problem of all.

It is natural that British people should judge the Russian situation from the British standpoint. It is said, "Here are people crushed beneath an autocracy not fitted to an enlightened twentieth century. They are cruelly overtaxed, are not allowed to voice their opinions, are flogged and shot and sent to Siberia. Wouldn't we rise in rebellion if such things were attempted in Britain?"

Quite so. But the Russians are not Britons. They neither have our customs, nor are their ways of thought the same as our own. They live in Europe, and we call them Europeans. Yet the Russian, despite his veneer of civilisation, is an Oriental. Many Russians may take that as an unkind remark. Many of my readers may know educated Russians, and have found them, as I have found them, most charming people. But to see the real Russian you must see him among his brother Russians, when he is not on his good behaviour before English people. Then come out traits that are not Western, but Eastern. And until we regard the problem in Russia rather from an Oriental point of view, and not from a purely Western, judged by British standards, it is impossible to get anything like an understanding of what is the cause of the savagery now staining the Empire of the Czar with blood.

The tremendous difficulty which constantly confronts the investigator is to reach the truth. It is

not that all Russians are liars, but simply that the truth is not in them. Russian officials assure you that the country is quietening down, that the people understand the Government intend to do the right thing, but that they are terrorised by the revolutionaries, and that the gendarmes are doing a valuable service to the country in rooting out the vermin who are destroying the very foundations of national well-being. On the other hand, the reformer, with his mouth full of fine words about the rights of the people, tells you the country is ablaze, that the Government will topple to its ruin within a year. Both are honourable men. It is hard to recognise the same incident as related by those who support the autocracy and those who support the revolution. They view it from different standpoints, and with the Eastern kink in their minds they tell you what it is most convenient you would believe.

There is the matter of corruption. That the administration is rotten to the core is undoubted. Officials receive small salaries, but they live well. To be blunt, they blackmail private individuals, and they appropriate public money. Huge grants will be made, say, for the construction of a railway. It will be a very defective line, cheaply built, but the inspectors will wink and give favourable reports because their pockets get lined with what the Americans call "boodle." During the Russo-Japanese war corruption was rife, inspectors passed 20,000 topcoats as 100,000 topcoats, and shared the difference with the contractors. Money contributed by the philanthropic public for the benefit of the

wounded was annexed by everybody, from the Grand Dukes down to the clerks.

Nine out of every ten Russians are fiery with wrath at the corruption in their land. But I have noticed that, however much a Russian may denounce corruption, most Russians are anxious to get into the public service, and when they succeed and opportunity comes their way they are just as willing to take bribes and squeeze blackmail as any of the others.

The fact of the matter is that much of the existing turbulence is engineered by the discontented "outs" against the powerful "ins." The Russian public service is stuffed full, chock-a-block; it is swollen by numbers. When a telegram is sent there is one man to count the words, another to mark the cost, another to take the money, and a fourth to give the receipt—all of which would be done by a girl in an English telegraph office. All these men have to be paid. The taxes, with big leakages, are enormous, and it is the *intelligenzia*—the more or less educated people, and not necessarily the "intellectuals," as I have seen the word translated in English prints—who are shut out from Government service—it is they, and not so much the peasants, wretched, starving, downtrodden though these be, who cry loudest for Constitutional Government.

Though there is much flamboyant talk about placing Russia, in the matter of Government, on a level with civilised European nations—much of it sincere, for the Russian is impulsive—the fight is for power rather than for the good of Russia. The

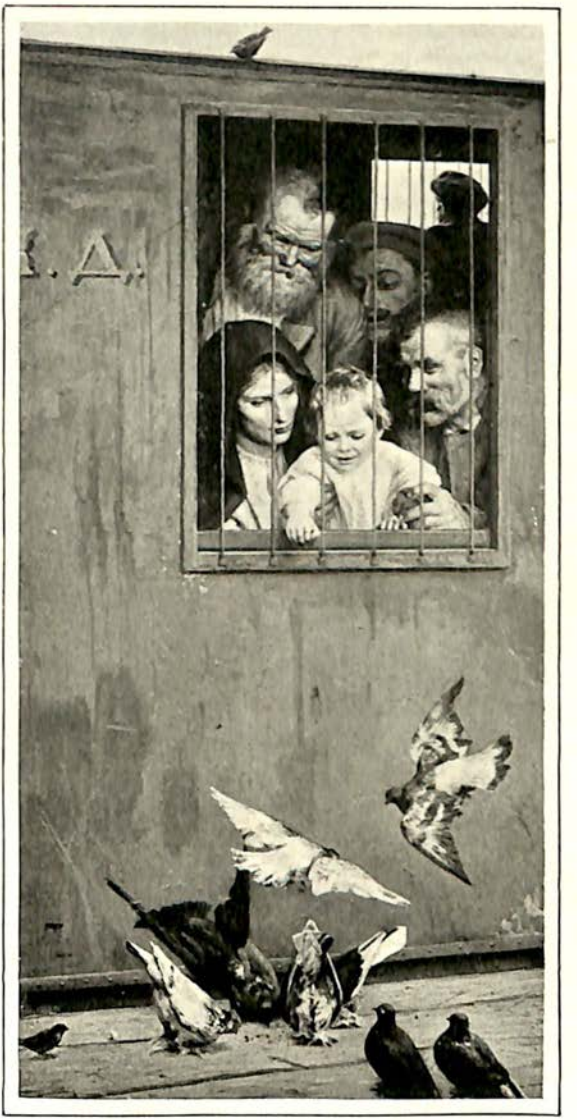
Russian is not patriotic as patriotism is understood elsewhere. But he knows when he is being trodden upon, and his chief desire is to tread on somebody else.

Government in Russia is maintained not on the respect of the governed for those in authority, but on the strictly Oriental plan of fear and oppression. What is for the good of the people is a minor consideration. What will benefit the individual is all-important.

So the bureaucracy in Russia, upholding the autocracy of the Czar, have everything to lose by a change. The Grand Dukes, members of the Royal house, are the deadliest enemies of any reform, however much the Emperor himself might be amicably disposed. Alexander II. was assassinated in 1881, when on the point of giving political freedom to his people, not by the Nihilists, but by the upholders of the bureaucracy and—it is an open secret—the Grand Ducal party. The Czar knows perfectly well that though his life is sought by the revolutionaries because he does not grant reform, the Grand Ducal party will take steps to remove him if he shows any real disposition towards reform. The Czar is between the devil and the deep sea, is ever temporising, and, in consequence, has not won much esteem from the rest of Europe.

Following the Crimean War the Russian Government looked round to understand why Britain and France were so prosperous.

Education! was the answer. And what was education? Having universities! Then let Russia have universities—plenty of them.



EN ROUTE FOR SIBERIA.

(*From the Painting by N. A. Tarochenko, Galérie Trétiakoff.*)

Russia has many universities; few countries are better supplied. But the governing classes did not send their own sons. The universities were left to the sons of tradespeople and the minor officials. And it was in those universities that the young men of Russia began to breathe Western ideas and to make comparisons. Sentimental, emotional, mercurial, they jumped right ahead, and drank at the fountain of Karl Marx and other famous Socialists. They were full of high-falutin', extravagant ambitions. When they went into the business of life it was to be blackmailed merchants or petty clerks. They were the *intelligenzia* of Russia, and their hearts were full of bitterness.

The Government, having created this class, discovered, when it was too late, that it had brought into existence a criticising, discontented monster. The universities are now regarded as the breeding places of revolution, and the *intelligenzia* are dangerous folk.

Nothing could be more futile than the tactics of the Government toward this class. True, many of their thoughts were in the air and their aims silly. But instead of meeting these people, doing something to train them to walk along the path of moderate reform by making judicious concessions, the Oriental device was adopted—crush them.

If there had been only the Russian people to be dealt with the Government might have succeeded in crushing them, for the Russian understands force. But there were and are alien races in the Empire, the people of the Baltic Provinces, really Germans,

and speaking the German tongue, the Poles, a cultured people, and the Jews, certainly intellectual —all superiors of the Russian in mental capacity. These are antagonistic to the Government, and have been zealous in the advocacy of liberal principles. And the Government, unreasoning, but behaving with the instincts of a goaded bull, have rushed blindly and furiously at each. At one time the bureaucracy are certain the Germans are behind the unrest; then the Poles are accused, and there is harsh punishment. When there is nobody else to attack there is always the Jew.

The Jew has long been the trump card of the Russian Government. When things are getting very bad for the Administration, then to tickle the animosity of the slothful Russian against the quick-witted Jew has invariably been successful. Instead of the Czar's Government being vindictive toward the Jew there should be gratitude, for the Hebrew makes the best of red herrings to draw across the trail of public feeling against the Government. Now and then the Government appeal to the Russians that all the trouble is fomented by foreigners, and it is insinuated foreign lands are jealous of the power of Russia, and want to break it by internal dissension.

To my mind the Jews are the great, if not the greatest, factor in Russian politics. In a later chapter I deal with their lot. All I say here is that the Jew invariably gets ahead of the Muscovite in business. Take the great Black Sea port of Odessa. Forty per cent. of the populace are Jews. They

PEASANTS LISTENING TO A PROCLAMATION.

have all the trade in their hands. All the grain exporters are Jews; all the shopkeepers are Jews. I am no anti-Semite, but I can understand the gall of the Russian, slow-witted, lacking initiative, lazy, on finding himself, wherever he turns, in the grip of the Hebrew. It is not a kindly grip. I well understand that much of what the Jew is to-day is the direct consequence of centuries of oppression. Folk in business, however, do not take that into account. They only see what the Jew is doing. He grinds; he is underhand; he is unscrupulous; he is without mercy; he hates the Russians and refuses the Russian name; when he holds the whip he lets those about him feel it. So the Jew is hated, by Russians and by foreigners resident in Russia, with an intensity difficult for people in other lands to conceive.

A distinguished Russian, in whose company I spent the better part of three days, put the case very much in these words: "We want great political changes in Russia. We want to slay the bureaucracy, which is the bane of our national life. Every sensible man is agreed upon that. But the Russian is not a revolutionary. All that is taking place now is not engineered by Russians. The Jews are behind it all. I grant you the Jew is our intellectual superior. But Russia does not belong to him; he is an alien. We did not ask him to come here. It is our country. You think it unfair the Jew should be placed under disabilities. There are certain parts of Russia in which he is not allowed to live. There are all sorts of restrictions put in the way of his

holding land. We have restricted his presence in our universities to ten per cent. We don't allow him to have administrative control. All very wrong from the British point of view. You English are a match for the Jews: we are not. If we gave the Jew equal rights, what would happen? We know what would happen. The ten per cent. now in the universities win all the prizes. All the great administrative posts would soon be in Jewish hands. Our ignorant, drunken peasants would soon find themselves mortgaged out of their lands. The Jew is a politician down to his dirty finger-nails. The Jews would control the Duma—the Government would be run for the benefit of the Jews. I tell you, sir, the Jews who are working this revolutionary movement are hoodwinking the Russian masses. 'Equal rights for all' is a fine phrase. That banner was unfurled by the Jews, and the mob have rallied under it. But it is not equal rights that the Jew wants. His aim is to get freedom to exercise all his duplicity upon the Russian people. They are short-sighted. In their agitation for revolution they are really preparing a yoke for their own necks—a Jewish yoke instead of a bureaucratic yoke, and, bad as that is, much to be preferred to the other. Yes, we are passing through revolutionary times; we have gone too far to stop now; there will be great changes. But this uprising will be nothing to the uprising ten or fifteen years hence, when the blind Russian people open their eyes to find their country has got into the hands of the Jews. The great problem is not so much how to give liberty to the Russian

people as how Russia shall be preserved to the Russians against an alien but more intellectual race living in their midst. The *pogrom* is a crude, barbarous, Eastern weapon. You know, as we all know, that the Government is behind the massacres of the Jews, organised and arranged for certain dates. Racial passion is aroused, and the infuriated mob is turned loose upon the Jewish quarters whilst the soldiers stand on one side. It is all very, very horrible to you Western nations. That is because you don't understand. The Government, in authorising *pogroms*, is really doing something to save the Russians from getting completely under the dominance of the Jews. We hate the Jew, not because he is our superior from your point of view, but from our point of view because he wants to be master in a land which is not his. The Jew can leave Russia if he wants. But he doesn't want. He prefers to remain here, with all the risks to life, because he can make more money than in countries where the people are his mental equals. I tell you, sir, the Jew has to be held down if Russia is to remain our own; and the bloody *pogrom*, which makes you shudder, is one of the sticks used to force him to understand he is not master."

There is the wash of many forces beating about the foundations of Russia, and the Government have one weapon—force. That is used in a way peculiarly Oriental in its obtuse brutality. You do not make an angry man conciliatory by kicking him in the ribs, and you do not gain the sympathy of the spectator by giving him a bang because he is not

loud in admiration. The Russian Government, because they know some working men are inclined to Socialism, regard every labour agitation as subversive of authority, try to throttle it, generally get the wrong men by the throat, and by coercion practically drive the whole of the working classes in the towns into the ranks of the Social Democrats. Students are disposed to be hot-headed, but instead of the Government taking a students' demonstration as boyish blowing-off steam, they treat all students as suspects, and shut the Universities.

I do not say the Russian authorities are one whit worse than any other section of the Russian people would be if they were in a similar position of power. The Russian is the same man, whether he wears the uniform of the Czar or the red shirt of the revolutionary. Rather am I convinced in the belief that in matters of constitutional government the Russian lacks the essentials; that public spirit does not exist, that compromise is not understood, but extremes always pressed, and that the only thing the Russian, beneath his thin garment of civilisation, really understands is force.

That explains the extraordinary spectacle which Russia is furnishing to the world to-day. The throwing of bombs by the revolutionaries, and the meaningless sabreing of the mob by the Cossacks, though repulsive to and beyond the comprehension of people of Western temperament, are perfectly in accordance with the aims of the rival parties within the Empire. The virtuous, law-abiding, stay-at-home Englishman wonders why the Russians cannot argue out their

differences like sensible people. One might just as well expect the tiger and the elephant to enter into friendly confab which is to be boss. One or other is to be boss, and the supremacy is only to be secured by bloodshed. The Government have now the power, and authority is upheld by rifles. The answer of the Russian people is the throwing of bombs. Each side pursues the policy of terrorising the other side. That soldiers should fire into a mob of men, women, and children is no more to the Russian Government than a police intimation in England that order must be preserved. The throwing of bombs by the revolutionaries is regarded very much in the same light as an electioneering pamphlet would be in England.

Not one-tenth of the atrocities perpetrated in Russia ever reaches the English papers. I am fairly sure the public at home are shocked and horror-stricken at the telegraphic information sent. The Russians themselves are not shocked; stories of atrocious deeds excite them no more than incidents in a novel; the report of an assassination by bomb is regarded very much as an astute and successful move in chess. That is on the surface, so far as the general public are concerned. But everybody who is not in the employ of the Government is decidedly against it, and beneath the surface the desperadoes, the extremists, are at work steeped to the lips in rebellion.

In the purely agricultural districts the peasant looks to the Duma as an engine which will secure him land. He has paid rent for many years; he has been told that he has paid the value of the land many

times; he expects the Duma to relieve him from paying any more, and in the meantime he is destroying the farmsteads of his employer, refusing to till his land, is reduced to starvation, and then moans that help is not given him.

The lot of the Russian peasant is a hard one. When he was freed from serfdom the customary hallelujahs were sung. I am not so sure that the peasant really benefited by the change. As a serf he was the servant of a master to whose interest it was he should be in good health and fit for work. The liberation simply meant that the peasant changed masters. The second master was the Government—impersonal, and with no other aim than to squeeze the last kopek in the way of taxation out of the *moudjik*. The *moudjik*, illiterate, simple, kindly-hearted, except when his passion is aroused, and then he is a beast, has been taught that all the money he pays goes to feed fat and lazy officials; he is convinced that the Duma will give him as much land as he wants for nothing, and that never again will he have to pay taxes.

Poor *moudjik!* He doesn't know, and he would probably stone anybody who told him, that he is the worst farmer in the world, that his Eastern traits trammel him as an agriculturist, that he is incurably lazy, and that it is neither the neglect of the Almighty, nor the oppression of the Government, but generally his own sloth, which is responsible for famine.

Personally I am much of a sceptic concerning advantage which will come to Russia from the new

A TYPICAL MUSCOVITE FAMILY.

Duma. As in the late Duma, there will be much talk about liberty and equality and fraternity, and the usual catch phrases—for the Russian is a great talker, and, strange compound that he is, idealism tickles his very soul. But behind all the jabber concerning the rights of humanity, the froth resultant from contact with Western civilisation, is hatred of those who have the power, not because it is abused, but because it is possessed.

That there is a great tragedy in store for Russia is certain. Not only is the mass against the Government, which is now fighting for its very life, but republicanism and social democracy are stalking through the land. A republic, with Jack as good as his master, is a picture which has fascinated others besides the beaten and uneducated Russian. Spoliation of the well-to-do—wealthy by robbing the worker is the argument—is believed in by three-fourths of the people of Russia. So not only is there a rising against the Government, but, what is more fearful, there is the rising of the ignorant masses against those who are better off.

When in the crash of affairs the Duma gets the upper hand of the bureaucracy—and all the portents are that it will, though perhaps not yet—and the huge, unreasoning Russian horde comes into what it regards as its long-delayed heritage, then will be red tragedy. If Russia is saved from wild anarchy it will be by the foreign elements in the Empire rather than by the Russians themselves. For the Russian does not believe the words, and he distrusts the motives, of others. That he has not a

Government like civilised countries he feels as an affront, but that he is capable of constitutional government, such as we know it in Great Britain, I am a confirmed sceptic.

That is why, to my mind at least, the career of Russia cannot be calculated. A benevolent autocracy, willing to be merged by degrees into a constitutional monarchy, would be best for Russia. But the autocracy is not benevolent, and, whatever may be said to the world, it hates constitutionalism. On the other hand, the democracy wants, at one spring, to vault into the very forefront of enlightened, socialistic government by the people. It is a dream. The road Russia will have to travel is thorny.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CITY OF TERROR.

Murder Rampant—The Police demoralised—Stupid Brutality of the Soldiery—Suppression of the University—Circulation of Revolutionary Literature—Chief of the Secret Police—A "Policeman Killer"—Street Scenes—Revolutionary Children—Confiscation of Buildings from which Bombs are Thrown—Scapegoats—Business at a Standstill—Hatred of Russia Universal in Poland—A Conservative Race—How Townsmen are regarded in the Country—Persecution of the Jews.

In Warsaw, capital of Poland—once a gay city, now the city of terror—the revolt against the autocracy of the Czar and the bureaucracy of his Government is in the stage of red riot. Bomb throwing, revolver firing, murders with mutilation are the rule.

Russian soldiers are everywhere. Each few yards a white-bloused, pancake-hatted, bronzed and brutal soldier is standing with fixed bayonet. Do not put your hand hurriedly into your pocket, or cold steel may seek a sudden way through your ribs: your action is too much like the drawing of a revolver. Mounted grim and fierce-visaged Cossacks, with guns poised on thighs, patrol the streets.

But more soldiers are killed than civilians. As

though from the earth spring men with bludgeons and revolvers. Bang! whack! a spray of blood, and three men wearing the uniform of Russia are sprawling dead on the ground. A bomb is thrown, and the body of a high military official is rent into an unrecognisable pulp. The assassins escape. They always escape.

Though murder stalks the narrow streets of Warsaw, nobody checks its path. The police are demoralised. No wonder, when twenty of their number have their brains battered out with bludgeons in a day. They have pleaded with the authorities to be allowed to resign. Refused; but now each policeman walks his beat with armed soldiers on either side and a soldier behind. Yet crime is rife. There are innumerable arrests, but generally of the wrong people.

Life is one long thrill. There is no telling when a bomb may be thrown or a revolver crack, or Cossacks come swinging along whacking all with their swords, or when you may be arrested, or when a policeman, with the instant conviction there is something suspicious about your appearance, may smash in your face with the butt end of his pistol, and a soldier crack your ribs with a blow from his gun.

The soldiery move along the streets in line, much like the way in which the police clear the course on Epsom Downs prior to a horse race. It is well to keep hands away from pockets. Somebody is pounced upon. If wise, he throws up his hands; he is searched. It is a crime to carry a

AN ARREST.

PREACHING THE REVOLUTION.

revolver or a revolutionary print. Let one or other, or both, be found on a man, and the police belabour him with their pistols, break his face, knock him insensible, and then arrest him. He is hurried away. There is no public trial. He is sentenced by court-martial, and is shot in the citadel in the morning.

The methods followed in Warsaw filled me with disgust and with despair. The military authorities, impotent to repress disorder, inefficient in capturing the evil-doers, behaved with stupid brutality toward the rest of the people, and forced the latter to sympathise with the assassins. The Polish people have no affection for the bomb-throwers—are, indeed, in fear of a mad and bloody contest between rival sections of society, Labour *versus* Capital—they would like to see peace, and what is to be obtained politically from Russia secured by peaceful and constitutional means. But, being treated by the military as though they were accomplices, they accepted bomb-throwing as legitimate warfare.

Young fellows are inclined to big talk. When the students in Warsaw made a demonstration, the answer of the Government was to close the university. It has now (1907) been closed for nearly three years. The result has been that those inclined to revolution have become eager, and those who were chill have, with bitterness, joined the extremists. Students whose tongues wagged have been arrested; many have been exiled to Siberia; those with leanings toward journalism have had

handkerchiefs put round their eyes and have been shot.

By law it is high treason to sell a revolutionary print. But they are sold. I bought several. A beggar comes into a café bleating for help. I give him five kopeks, and he pushes into my hand a sheet. Others do the same. It is clear to anybody with eyes what is going on. People buy the prohibited rags because they are scurrilous and seditious. They are the more scurrilous and seditious because they are printed by secret presses. If there were a free Press they would not be so scurrilous, and folk would not want to buy them.

Nothing is done to conciliate the mass of the populace, who have no hand in the uprising. The military are convinced ninety-nine out of every hundred persons in Warsaw are glad at the murder of officials. True. But the military cannot see that much of the prevailing spirit against the Russians is directly due to the heartless bullish attacks by the gendarmes on all and sundry. However much I sympathise with the endeavours of the Russian Government to lay revolutionary assassins by the heels and put a stop to the rampant lawlessness in the big cities, I am convinced the Russians themselves, with their short-sighted dragooning methods, are to blame for the state of things which, in Warsaw, is merging toward chaos.

I had a talk with one of the revolutionary leaders —a wiry, fluent, touzle-haired, dirty-linened Polish Jew—who pushed aside my abhorrence of bomb-throwing with the remark: "The Government kill

thousands of us; we kill a few of them. They endeavour to terrorise the people; the only answer of the people is to terrorise the Government."

With eyes briskly jumping round to catch any eavesdropper, as we sat in a shady corner of a fourth-rate café and played with our coffee spoons, he explained to me the manner in which the secret societies worked. In Russia lots are drawn by the members who shall kill particular officials; a time limit is given, sometimes three, sometimes six months. The chosen have nothing to do but make their preparations and kill. It is known when the stroke is to be made. When there is a delay for a few hours the news is spread that the deed is done even before it has been attempted. When the Grand Duke Sergius was assassinated in the Kremlin in Moscow lots of revolutionaries were hanging round the neighbourhood waiting for the news—as loungers hang round the Angel and the Elephant and Castle in London waiting for the results of horse races. In Poland there is no lot-drawing. There are always plenty of candidates ready to sacrifice themselves for the cause. They are selected with care—generally cool but enthusiastic young men. If any member of the Socialist-revolutionary party terrorises for private gain instead of handing funds over to the secret society he is shot.

My revolutionary acquaintance deprecated the murder of soldiers. "That is bad," said he; "we have now all the soldiers against us, whereas if we had left the soldiers alone and only killed the high officials we might have got them over to our

side. At one time the Government were shaking that the soldiers might come over to our side. Now the soldiers are angered because so many of their friends have been killed and—well, you have seen what goes on in the streets."

One afternoon I spent in the Warsaw prison talking with the Chief of the Secret Police—a mild-mannered man, who puffed dainty cigarettes and gently complained of overwork. When I arrived he was examining three young fellows. They had been in custody for a week, arrested by the gendarmes for the usual unknown reason, cast into prison, and no charge made.

"Fancy!" he said, with a little disgust, "these men have been under arrest for a week, and this is the first I hear of it." He let them go, and they bowed as though he had done them an honour.

The chief warder came hurrying in: "There are nineteen men in the yard on the point of mutiny; they have had nothing to eat for two days." He was in distress. They were all men awaiting trial, and were desperate with hunger. Men in custody, said the chief, can be supplied with food by friends, whilst others——!

"Well, what happens to the others?" I asked.

He raised his shoulders and then he raised his eyebrows. "They just die," he said.

But afterwards I learnt that this man, whose life was sought by the revolutionaries and who was always carefully guarded, spent two or three roubles each day of his private money to provide some of the prisoners with food.

RUSSIAN SOLDIERS GUARDING GOODS.

He showed me a "policeman killer." To a heavy chunk of lead, weighing about two pounds, was attached a spiral of thick copper, about eighteen inches long and with a handle at the end. The spiral provided a swing, so that a single blow from the lead would crack a skull like a filbert. A cart-load of these had been captured.

Every minute something dramatic is to be seen in the streets of Warsaw—and you may be a participant in a lively episode any instant. Two hundred wild Cossacks tear through the streets with nine prisoners—their hands tied behind and a strap round the waist fastened to the stirrup. They run their hardest, for if they stumble they will be trampled to death beneath horses' hoofs. The shaggy, half-barbarous warriors from the Don regions look picturesque as they go by with jangling accoutrements. There is nothing picturesque about the thronged men, who are gas workers on strike, and have been talking loudly.

A droshki rattles by. In it are four soldiers and a young woman. She has been dabbling in treason, and looks rather pleased at her position. A patrol with rifles slung on shoulders trudge the gutter at the pace of London sandwich men. Men are repairing the street; soldiers guard the setts. Soldiers are in front of the banks, before the hotels, everywhere. All police stations are barricaded. A waggon of provisions for the soldiers is guarded; so is a coffin. It seems strange a furniture van should be so closely protected, till it leaks out that it is full of prisoners.

Arrests are sudden, the trials are secret, and each morning in the grey dawn rifle shots may be heard in the Citadel, followed by the beating of drums. Revolutionaries, with bandaged eyes, have tumbled into shallow graves, the earth has been quickly shovelled in and beaten down by the tramp of the troops to the tune of the kettledrums.

I was in a café. The place was surrounded by soldiery. As people left they were pounced upon and searched. With a friend I remained to the last.

As we left the order was "Hands up!" "Astor oisna; ya Anglichanin!" ("Have a care; I am an Englishman!") I said. I was asked to show my passport, and having produced the pale blue sheet supplied me by the British Foreign Office, which none of the soldiery could read, I was allowed to go.

One of the consequences of the Warsaw University being closed is that the public elementary schools—where Russian is taught and Polish is tabooed—are boycotted. The revolutionary spirit extends to the children. If any go to school the rest waylay them, stone them, beat them with sticks, and maim them. The youngsters get red handkerchiefs and march past the policemen, waving the emblem of revolution and singing Polish national songs. The police scatter them with their scabbards, and occasionally arrest a boy.

When a bomb has been thrown the miscreant escapes. In a minute or two up tramp the patrol, and the first thing they do is to fire a volley at the building. If anybody gets in the way and is shot, it is his own fault. A building from which a bomb

has been thrown is confiscated by the Government. Every one moves out, and a barrier, stretching half across the street, is erected. The building is "To let." But no one desires to become a tenant of the Russian Government. The gas company and the water company shut off gas and water and refuse the supply. Anybody who rented the building would meet a quick death from a bludgeon.

All the young Jews have been rounded up by the soldiery and photographed. When there is a bomb outrage and the miscreant escapes—as he invariably does—vengeance falls on some wretched Jew. The manufacture of evidence is very easy. He is guilty and is shot.

One night the soldiers came across a group of patriarchal Jews in their synagogue mumbling passages from the Talmud. That they should be together at dead of night and reading from books was proof of sedition! Every one was cudgelled.

I was at the railway station one morning. A train came in, and two soldiers with bayonets fixed jumped to each carriage door. There was the hustling, reckless arrest of some twenty peasants, women and children as well as men, and they were driven at the bayonet point to a corner of the platform. They were travelling without passports.

A gentleman returning from shooting in the country had a case of guns. He had permission to carry arms. But without looking at the permit the soldiers proceeded to beat in his skull with their revolver butts.

A soldier caught a man extinguishing lamps in

the early morning last autumn—a legitimate thing to do, because he was employed by the municipality to put out the lights. The soldier dug his bayonet into him.

All business is at a standstill. The theatres are closed, and only the most daring folk walk along the streets after dark. The Jews, trembling at the prospect of massacre, have closed their shops—sure proof in the eyes of the soldiery that black crime is being hatched behind the shutters. So doors are crashed in and places ransacked.

The more repressive the measures the greater the lawlessness. To be stopped in the main streets by men with revolvers and have watch and money stolen is of hourly occurrence. Nobody interferes. It is not their business, and they do not want bullets fired into them. A man is shot to procure a rouble (= a florin). Robbers dressed as soldiers stop people in side streets, knock the life out of them, and despoil them.

I was walking along a street when pistol-shots rang, and people edged into shop-doors to get out of range. It is dangerous to run—it is suspicious, and a rifle-bullet can travel quicker than you can. I moved forward to see what was going on. An old man was lying head downwards on the steps of his shop, and the red was streaming from his hair. He was dead. A bandit had robbed his till, and when he followed the thief towards the street to raise the alarm the robber shot him three times. Then the murderer had walked away, with nobody daring to lay hands on him.

SATIRES ON THE RUSSIAN TROOPS.

(*Prohibited Picture Postcards from Moscow.*)

Two soldiers were standing by the corpse. Several tiny children were looking with quaint interest upon the old man, so quiet, his feet in the doorway and his head down two steps on the stones. The blood trickled across the slabs and mingled with the grey sluggish sewage in the gutter. The children laughed.

Everybody in Poland is against Russia. There are the more intelligent Poles, whose hearts are seared with hatred towards the Power which has crushed their nationality, has attempted to stamp out the Polish language, compelled young Poles to enter the Russian army and serve in distant parts of the Empire, while Russian soldiers, with the swagger of the conqueror, have flooded Poland and terrorised the land. These Poles sigh for liberty. They would secure autonomy by peaceful, constitutional means. Yet they are not opposed to others taking more drastic measures to break the rod of Russia.

There are the Socialists, who do not care for autonomy, but who want equality and rights of labour and all the rest. They were, until recently, inclined to work for these things on English trade-union lines. They become convinced, through pressure from the Social Democrats, that they are asking for the moon—that the only way to get concessions from Russia is to make all government impossible, to remove all high officials, and cause Russian soldiers to be sick with fear. To them the day for argument had gone. The bomb, the revolver, and the bludgeon are the weapons.

There are Jews—Warsaw is full with Jews—poor, pale, ill-nurtured, shallow-chested, whining creatures, who slither along the streets, sad-eyed, emaciated, wearing long, ill-fitting coats buttoned close as though to save their owners from shivering. They are the outcasts. They are ostracised from public service. A Jew cannot even be a street cleaner. The Poles hate them because they are usurers, have laid their hands on the commerce of the country, and insist on the blood as well as the pound of flesh in all transactions. Social Democrats hate them because they do not work with their hands. When revolution by assassination became the programme of the Social Democrats, and the Jews wanted to join in, they were spurned as white-livered cringers. The answer of the young Jews was to murder six policemen in one day. That proved their mettle, and the Bund, the political organisation of the Jews against the Government, was allied to the Social Democrats.

There are the Anarchists, who share with the others passionate resentment toward Russia, but are the enemies of all those who are better off than themselves. They labour for the Era of Peace by throwing bombs into cafés where business men are smoking and talking, by "holding up" trains, and, with poised revolvers, obtaining money, watches, and jewels, by raiding banks, by stopping pedestrians, demanding their belongings, and getting them. The police dare not interfere; the public dare not interfere. Warsaw is without law.

For a hundred years Russia has sown bitterness

in Poland. Now the harvest is being reaped—and it is bloody.

The Poles, envenomed by long years of oppression, see in the revolution, speeding like a fiery cross over the sad and barren steppes of Muscovy, the chance which does not often come to a stricken people.

But Poland has no army. Her sons, under conscription, wear the uniform of the Czar; they serve their time of soldiery in regions far off, where the Polak tongue is alien, in the mountains of the Ural, in the flat lands of the Volga, among the tribes beyond the Caucasus, on the wastes of Siberia.

Poland is full of troops—a hundred thousand of them — with bayonets ever fixed, with guns ever loaded. They are Russian troops. Cavalry are in every town. Cossacks—fierce, tawny-faced, Mongol-eyed, mounted on heavy horses, and clad in horse-hair cloaks, whilst on their heads are the shaggy sheepskins of Astrakan—chase through the streets. It is imprisonment for a Pole to speak against the Russian Government; it is exile to Siberia for him to be a propagandist of revolution. Poland has no weapon against the enemy except the weapon accursed by civilised nations—assassination.

Russian officials are marked men. They may be kindly enough, and even esteemed for personal qualities. But they are the representatives of the hated Power. Bombs are thrown and Governors disappear. Revolvers spit lead, and Russian officers

bite the pavement. There is a rush, the swing of iron-braced truncheons, and the skulls of soldiers have been beaten in. No matter how brutal the murder, nobody attempts to capture the murderer.

It is not that the Poles are bloodthirsty. It is simply that all sections have come to recognise—though there are plenty who will not say it in so many words—that to get wrongs righted by peaceful means is impossible. The more assassinations there are, the more troops does Russia pour into Poland, and the more the troops pursue the policy of terrorism the more desperate get the revolutionists.

A common error is that Poland is sympathetic toward the Social Democrats of Russia. It is true enough of the artisans in the towns — they are soaked in cheap German Socialism—would have everybody on an equality, appropriate the land of the rich, and divide it among the peasantry, regard all those whose hands are not coarse with toil as parasites on the workers. Poland, however, is an agricultural land, and the Poles, as a race, are conservative. The educated classes desire autonomy; they want the burden of taxation to be for the benefit of Poland, and not for the maintenance of a mammoth Muscovite army, one of the uses of which is to keep Poland in subjection. If young Poles are to be soldiers, they should serve in Poland. Above all, the heart of the Pole hungers for the preservation of his nationality by the retention of the Polish speech. Polish is forbidden in all public departments; it is displaced by Russian in the elementary

schools. These Poles appreciate that Poland could not stand alone. They would be content with an autonomy such as Finland has wrested from Russia. The Nationalist party have influence with the peasants, who, whilst eager enough for land on the easiest of terms, understand the absurdity of expecting they can get it for nothing. They have no wish that everything should be exploited to the advantage of the Social Democrats of the towns, of whom they have a sincere suspicion. For a townsman to appear in a country district is to create terror that he is an agitator prepared to do anything that may take his mischievous fancy.

I had a personal experience of this. I was making a tour of Eastern Poland, and had accepted an invitation to spend a night as the guest of Count Izychi. Zatory, where the Count lives, is some twenty miles from a railway station, and therefore rather out of the track of affairs. Nevertheless rumours reach it. A Polish poet was my companion. When we drove through the grounds to the residence, we were amazed not to find anybody. The house was in habitation, but there were no inhabitants. We went to the residence of the village Catholic priest, noting that many of the cottages were streaked with crosses, which amounted to an intimation, "If you are out to massacre Jews, please remember we are Christians." An old woman assured us the priest had gone away, and she did not know when he would return. But when my poet friend, who was personally acquainted with the priest, raised his voice in astonishment, the

priest emerged from under the bed with apologies for his conduct, and giving the excuse that he had been told of the arrival of two strange men, speaking a strange language and therefore revolutionists! We went to the Count's house, and between twenty and thirty servants slowly emerged from their hiding places. When Count Izychi, who had been out riding over his immense property, returned—the next morning we drove to a point from where as far as the eye could range all was his land—there was material for one good laugh to break the story of Poland's trials.

The Nationalists are not averse from the Social Democrats carrying terror into the camp of Russia; but they deplore the commercial ruin ahead of Poland consequent upon the feverish unrest and the manner in which bands of robbers despoil banks, hold up trains, steal and murder with impunity.

Foreigners are giving Poland a wide berth because of danger to life. Credit is at a minimum, for the working classes care more for the Socialist propaganda than the sentiment of nationality. Industries are paralysed by strikes. Many large firms have crashed to bankruptcy. Others, prophesying communistic tumult, are seeing to themselves, sending abroad what money they can, and leaving their creditors to whistle.

Enormous amounts of foreign money are invested in Poland. No return is made, and there is a wonder what Germany, Austria, and France will do when investors become clamorous.

Business people, whilst secretly delighted with

TYPES OF FOLISH PEASANTRY.

the straits of Russia, are all indignation against the Socialists, the fathers of the Anarchists, whilst the Anarchists are half-brothers to the hooligans. Hooligans, in view of the impotence of the law, are waging war against society in general.

The police can do nothing. Every policeman in Warsaw, though guarded by three soldiers, fears a savage death at the hands of the revolutionaries. The gendarmes, who hold the capital like a place in siege—guarding every street corner, mounting every tramcar, ranging before every public building—are breeding revolutionists far quicker than are the seditious newspapers, which, prohibited by the authorities, are covertly sold in every café. The Pole does not like the Jew, who is his superior in money-making qualities. But the manner in which the authorities, blindly furious as a result of their incompetence in checking disorder, are harrying the poor Hebrews, because the Jew usually has no friends, is stirring resentment.

It is probably true wealthy Jews provide the active revolutionists with money. That is not sufficient reason why the soldiers, as I have seen them, should go through the streets of the Ghetto, invade the shops, and, under the plea of searching for firearms and prohibited literature, toss everything about in wanton destruction, whilst the Jew crouches on one side, dumb with terror, and with the awful look of an affrighted, cowering animal in his eyes. Many of these ashen-featured old Hebrews have no other politics than to be left in quiet to make a scanty livelihood by barter.

Young Jews are rounded up by the soldiers as ranchmen round up cattle. Every night the troops are busy in the Jewish quarters ransacking houses and maltreating people.

Perhaps the Polish Gentile would not mind much if it were only the Hebrew who had his ribs broken with the butt-end of a rifle. But all civilians are fair game for the Russian soldier. So many of his comrades have been slain by unknown hands that the Russian soldier seems to take his revenge by attacking every person to whom he takes a passing dislike.

If there were any set scheme in the arrest of pedestrians, searching and hustling them, it would be possible to overlook the occasional brutality of an ignorant soldier. But apparently there is no other endeavour than to knock terror into the heart of every person in Warsaw. The authorities are curiously out of touch with human nature if they imagine that when they fail to catch the desperadoes they stop assassinations by subjecting the innocent to indignities.

CHAPTER V.

THE STORY OF A NIGHT.

The Ghetto of Warsaw—The Polish Type of Jew—The Police and their Guard of Soldiers—Searching for Arms and Seditious Literature—A Block in the Street—At the Railway Station—A Batch of Prisoners—In the Train—Chat with a Russian Officer—Contempt for the Authorities—A Jew denounces a Murderer—Missing Passports.

IT is just dusk, and the rain which has been pouring all day is softening into a grey drizzle.

The streets are narrow, the houses high, the pavements broken, the roadways cobbled and miry.

This is the Ghetto of Warsaw, the Jew district in the capital of Poland. And Poland is under the heel of Russia, though with wriggles and curses and bloodshed it is endeavouring to free itself.

The streets are packed with Jews. Not one Jew fits the caricatures of the Hebrew we have in our comic prints, or in comic opera, or as I have seen them in real life on a Sunday morning on the promenade at Brighton, fat, podgy, hook-nosed, extravagantly bejewelled.

English Jews seem to have travelled from Judæa by way of Germany, and picked up a Teutonic corpulence *en route*.

The Warsaw Jew looks as though he had

travelled straight from the arid valleys of Palestine. He is tall and thin, and bearded and sallow and sad-eyed. There is no stamina about him. He has no chest, no muscle. He is a weak, emaciated creature. He wears a long, tight-fitting coat, buttoned from throat to foot, not unlike high Anglicans wear when in semi-canonicals. There isn't much manhood about him. He doesn't walk; he slinks. In his eye is the furtiveness of the beaten dog—there is the quick side glance and a shiver as though anticipating a fresh blow. I feel some contempt for him because he looks so mean.

At street junctions stand stalwart policemen, tall, big-bellied men, in blue uniforms striped with red. A sword hangs by the left side; a horse pistol is corded to the waist belt on the right.

These policemen have the fear of the grave in their faces. Each day a small mob beats several to death; some days as many as twenty are killed. So they are guarded by soldiers, three to each policeman. The soldiers are fair, well-made Russians, with rough, mud-coloured coats hanging loose about their shoulders; their long-legged boots are heavy soled and foul. The men rest on loaded rifles, and the bayonets are fixed.

For the people have risen against the Government. They have no Parliament in which to voice their wrongs. Any meeting held is dispersed with a fusillade of lead. The Government are trying to put down agitation with bullets and sabres. The people answer with bombs which blow officials into bloody tatters, with revolver shots in the back, with

the dig of stilettos into the heart, with swoops upon the gendarmes and police, and brutal murders.

And the carrion birds are uncaged, the scum of society. They rob, assault, and murder with impunity. The evildoers are never captured. The soldiers, maddened to blind wrath, let loose their vengeance on anybody they suspect.

They suspect all Jews. At the end of the funnel-like street is a cordon of soldiers. Everybody is penned in. Soldiers are in the shops. They are looking for revolvers and seditious literature. A hysterical Jew runs from his shop, and a slash of a Cossack's sabre lays open his cheek. The blood dyes his beard to henna hue, and dribbles down his black coat. He reels to the wall and sinks. A soldier kicks him. That is the way in which, under martial law, the military think they are rooting out the revolutionary spirit.

The shops are ransacked. Business papers are tossed upon the floor. Goods are tumbled about, ripped and broken. The Warsaw Jew has no spunk in him. He sidles into a corner and wrings his hands and weeps. But he is thankful if his face is not bashed in with the butt end of a pistol.

With delays and stoppages, I drive toward the bridge across the Vistula River, for I am catching the night train to Moscow. Suddenly there is a jam of droshkies and carts and open tramcars and pedestrians. I do the usual thing a Briton does under the circumstances. I swear. Evidently I am going to miss my train.

The bridge is blocked with soldiery. Hundreds

of soldiers are moving among the crowd. People are hauled from the droshkies and hustled from the tramcars. Hands are run over the person, feeling for revolvers. Hands are dived into pockets seeking prohibited papers. In the bag of a respectably dressed woman is discovered a seditious print. Two soldiers seize her and rush her to where some twenty arrested men and women are huddling behind bayonets. A Polish gentleman in a carriage adjoining mine thinks it hopeless to get through the throng, and gives orders to his coachman to turn. The horse is turned round and an attempt made at escape. In a moment fierce Cossacks prance round. The gentleman jumps to the ground. Soldiers grip him, tell him who his mother was—the filth which splashes from a soldier's mouth makes one's cheeks alternately hot and cold—and he is searched for incriminating documents.

It is raining hard and the night is dark. Only dim lamps flicker on bare bayonets and on the affrighted countenances of the people.

The drivers are swearing at each other for blocking the way; the soldiers are swearing and ill-using everybody.

The station is reached. Soldiers stand at arms by the entrances. Soldiers slouch in the big, well-lighted, whitewashed hall. Soldiers stand on either side of the ticket office. There is a soldier at the entrance to the refreshment room, and there are soldiers guarding the exits. Everybody is eyed askance; everybody is in dread.

The buffet is full of passengers waiting for the

night train. Russian tea is sipped, and there is a babel of tongues. A Polish lady is volubly indignant. She is wearing a red blouse, and there is a red ribbon in her hat. Trifling things which would be unnoticed in England. But she is advertising her sympathy with the revolutionaries. Russian officers, puffing cigarettes, pretend neither to see nor to hear her.

There is the clang of a bell. We gulp the last of our tea, seize our belongings, and make for the platform. We run the gauntlet of soldiers. The carriages are built on the American plan, with doors at each end of the cars. Two soldiers with fixed bayonets and a policeman are at each entrance. Again there is searching. Bags and portmanteaus are directed to be opened, and fists are dived down.

At one end of the platform is a bunch of peasants, squat, ill-kempt folk in dirty sheepskin coats and thonged sandals. The women, wearing gaudy handkerchiefs, squat, nursing their drowsy children. The men stand by with their long, tawny, and uncombed hair falling over grimy faces.

Their offence? They had arrived this morning without passports—forgotten them, is the excuse. Twelve hours have gone since they were made prisoners, and no orders have yet come what shall be done with them.

People settle down. The carriages are dirty and lit by candle. I am stable-companion with a Russian officer. We salute, offer cigarettes, and fall to talking.

How is the trouble to be stamped out? By

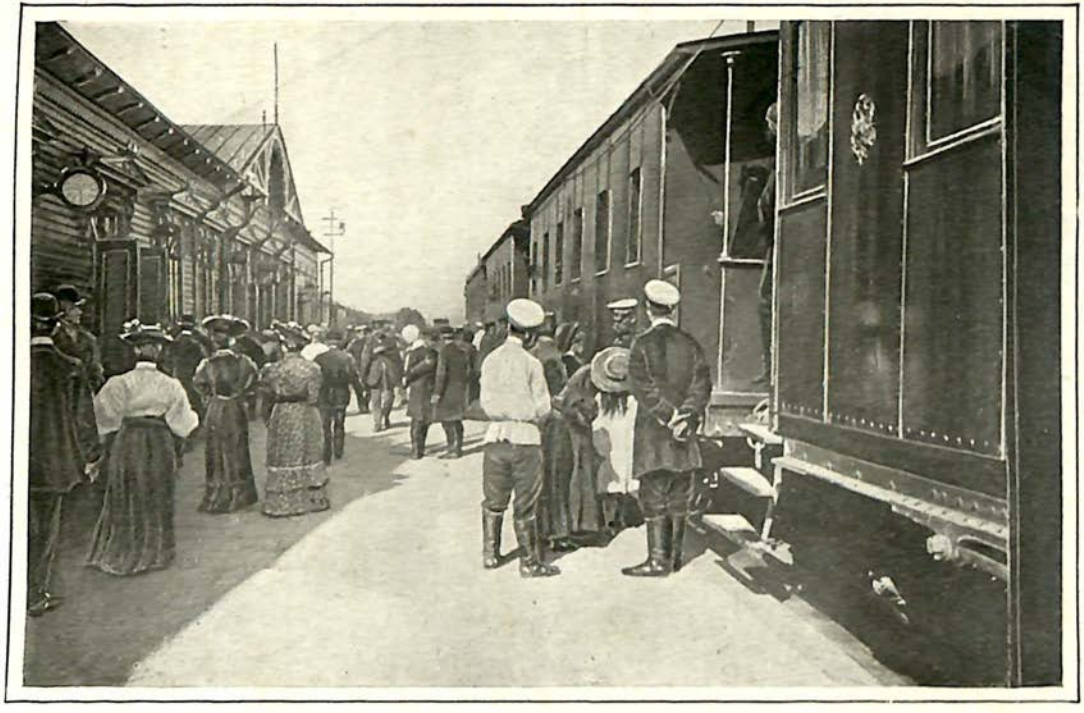
stern means, by iron! Reforms will come in time —it is true Russia is far behind other countries— but no reforms can be made until order is restored! There must be order, even if it can only be secured by artillery sweeping the streets. The revolutionaries—bah, they are vermin!

The train groans and the engine hoots as we trundle into the darkness.

Bang! We are sent sprawling. The wheels creak and grunt and the train shakes. Some women screech. Nerves are on tension, and every bump suggests train wreckers. But the train grinds on its way, and we decide there was nothing worse than a stray sleeper on the line, or that the line is badly laid.

A group of passengers meet in the corridor. Everybody is talking at the top of his or her voice, sometimes Russian, sometimes Polish, occasionally German. The Russian talks at you in raised tones, and pelts you with words as though he were a verbal Maxim gun.

"Yes, the people are arming," cries one man. "The authorities are getting hold of some, but the authorities are fools, geese, donkeys. The man who robbed the Moscow bank has got away. Oh, he would never have been caught in Switzerland if he had not got drunk and begun to throw money about. Yes, I know. Quite so. Two gendarmes brought him to the frontier, but ten soldiers and an officer took possession of him when he got to the Russian side. And he got away—oh, Lord, they always do get away—fools, geese, donkeys! You



SEARCHING OF RAILWAY PASSENGERS.

see they were all sleeping, and when the train was going up an incline the robber crossed his arms in front of his face, and made a dive through the window. There was a *troika* near, and he got away. Oh, the geese, the donkeys! Oh Lord!"

"Tut, that is the official story," says another man. "I know it is not true. The train was held up at a wayside station by the friends of the thief. They covered the engine-men with their guns, frightened the life out of the controller, and simply took the man away from the soldiers, who hadn't the courage to fire."

"Anyway, he escaped—oh, they always escape. He, he, the geese!"

"They say all the money stolen goes to the revolutionary funds, and that they kill anybody who keeps money for himself. He, he! I think there are a good many who need killing."

The corridor gets full of tobacco smoke.

"Oh, it would be all right if the police didn't provoke the people." This is said by a young fellow in a student's uniform. "Many of the police killed have been laid low by men in the pay of the police themselves, sometimes to get rid of somebody they don't want, but generally to give them excuse for terrorising the people!" This is getting near prohibited politics.

A dead silence falls upon us all. There is the slow jog-jog of the carriage over the metals.

A halt at a wayside station with two blinking lights. The clang of a bell, twice. There is a murmur, then distant uproar. We look from the

windows, and an agitated lantern can be seen. Somebody is running along.

"They are going to shoot," is the cry. "Don't get out. Are there any soldiers! Hurry! Back in the third coach. Don't get out! They are just going to shoot."

All is tumult. A great uproar is in a rear carriage. There are shrieks of women and heavy blows. "Oh, it is only the capture of a thief," is suggested.

We dismount; we stumble through the blackness. A shindy is in progress. The soldiers have hold of a man, and they are hitting him with their revolvers.

A Jew falls from the carriage. He jumps to his feet.

"That is the man," he screeches, "that is the man who murdered my wife and child. I'm sure, I'm sure! There were others, two others. They stopped us and robbed us; they took two roubles. They killed my wife and child. Then they ran away. That is the man, one of the men; oh, I'm sure he is the man! He took two roubles."

In the scuffle the murderer's ear has been torn. He looks a murderer. A woman spits in his face.

"That is the man, oh, that is the man!" continues the Jew in frenzy. "He killed my wife and child and took two roubles. They killed my wife and child because we had no more than two roubles. That is the man."

In the uncertain light of lanterns the murderer's

face is seen, bestial, glowering. He is panting with the struggle. But the soldiers have him tight.

Too long the train has been delayed. The officials are angry. We climb back to our coaches. The last to be heard as the engine grunts once more is the hoarse, passionate Jew: "He killed my wife and child and he took two roubles."

We go to our compartments and climb to our berths. I fall asleep to the rhythm of the heavy carriages slowly thumping over the rails.

There is a stoppage, and I wake up with a start. Through the blinds is the sallow flare of oil lamps. There is the shuffling of many feet. More passengers surely! I strike a match and see by my watch it is near one in the morning. The place is Brest Litovski, the first town over the Polish border into Russia.

Still there is the tramp of feet. I peep out and see soldiers—a close string of them, muffled in overcoats, with the collars up, and each man resting idly on his carbine. There is to be a complete search of the train for firearms.

The Russian officer, myself, and another man leave the carriage. Some people are restrained by bayonets, but the uniform of the officer is our passport. We meet other officers. Yes, the whole train is to be searched. I smile, and remark that everybody on the train has already run the gauntlet three times.

"Well, we shall search you," is the good-natured reply.

"All right," I answer, "only don't mistake a pipe-

case for a revolver, and don't imagine the air-tight cases in which I carry my photograph films are bombs."

Troops are on either side of the train. Soldiers are at each door. There is no escape. The searchers comprise an officer, four men who search, and six armed soldiers.

We climb into the third-class carriage, a long compartment, plainly painted, hard seated, and badly lit. It is crowded with poor folk and their bundles, enormous piles of goods. It is usual for the poorer Russian to take all his belongings into the carriage with him.

Many are awakened and affrighted. Others are still asleep, and lie in sluggish attitudes. If there are revolutionaries here they are of the weakest kind. There is the dour, melancholy look which is the characteristic of the Russian peasant. There is the cringing submissiveness, the wandering look in the eye, waiting for a sign of anger.

The men are heavy and dull. They gaze at the invaders without protest. The women are more alert, and begin unfastening their bundles. The children cry. The stench is sickening, and I light a cigar.

"Open everything," is the order.

The search begins. Hands are pushed deep into bundles, and the things hauled out. The men, the women, and the children—yes, the little ones of five and six years—are searched for revolvers.

"Open that!"

"It is nothing but bedding, worthy *gospodin!*"

"Open it!"

The peasant fumbles with the knots of the rope round the bundle. A soldier produces his knife and cuts the rope. True, nothing but bedding.

The eye of the officer falls upon a couple, man and woman, youngish, sitting in a corner, and maintaining passiveness. They are of the artisan class, fairly well clad, the man in a peaked cap, and the woman with a shawl over her head.

"Stand up!"

They stand up. They are rigid, and keep their lips tightly closed. They are searched with care. Nothing compromising. But the officer has never removed his eyes from them.

"Where do you come from?"

"From Lodz."

"Where are you going?"

"To Moscow."

"What is your business in Moscow?"

"Our mother is very ill, and we are going to her."

"Where is your passport?"

It is produced.

"Humph! Is this your passport?"

"It is."

"You have not stolen it?"

"No."

At the end of the carriage is raised the wail of a woman. There is protesting talk. A man is being hauled out of the carriage. His wife is pleading with clasped hands and running tears, and the children are holding her skirt and whimpering. The

dim candle flicks give a dramatic, eerie touch to the scene. The only glint is when the light touches a bayonet.

The arrested man protests he had a passport when he came on the train. He is calling upon Christ to witness the truth of his statement. He has lost it, or somebody has stolen it.

He is torn from his sobbing wife and children. He is flung out upon the platform, and stands with his back against the wall, and two soldiers watch there is no running. The man is meek, resigned.

Only the wife, who is not allowed to leave the carriage, is crying, and appealing to those about her to say they had seen her man's passport. The folk pay little heed. They are busy fastening up their bundles.

Slowly the search continues. We get to the second-class sleeping cars. The doors are hastily opened, and the awakened sleepers blink before the conductor's lamp. Men and women, it does not matter; the soldiers push their hands under the pillow, seize the clothing, pull papers from pockets and examine them, are inclined to be abusive if trunks are not opened with speed, throw contents on the floor and depart.

There are four students—revolutionaries every one. Student and revolutionist are synonymous terms in Russia. Everything is searched, and their passports are carefully scrutinised. They are inclined to chaff the soldiers, and suggest they had better climb outside on the roof to see if there are some revolvers there.

"One of these days you'll be exercising your fun in Siberia," remarks the officer.

For two hours the search continues. No one is respected. Everybody is brought out of bed—and it is dark and cold, and two in the morning. The better class passengers make not a murmur. Dumbly they do as they are told. There is no objection to the rough conduct of the troops. But though the tongue does not wag, the eye reveals the thoughts.

The rummage for revolvers and seditious documents is over at last. The result of two hundred soldiers on duty is the capture of one peasant who has lost his passport.

The engine shrieks, the wheels creak, the carriages groan. We go on our way through the terrorised land of Russia.

CHAPTER VI.

WITHIN THE JEWISH PALE.

The Jews placed under Disabilities for Economic Reasons—"The Jewish Pale"—Why the Jews remain in Russia—Jews outside the Pale—State and Municipal Office closed to them—Other Disabilities—The Jewish Bund and its Influence—A Typical Jewish Town—Why the Jew is hated—His Character Analysed—His Attitude towards Assassination—*Pogroms* Organised by the Police—A Public Meeting at Minsk—An Unprovoked Massacre by the Soldiery—A Talk with the Chief of Police—The Czar's Feeling towards the Jews.

THERE are 11,000,000 Jews in the world. Of these 6,000,000 live in the Russian Empire. The Jews have not willingly gone to live under Muscovite rule. But as in the Middle Ages Poland was practically the centre of Israel, the annexation of Poland by Russia made the Jews subjects of the Czar.

No hindrances are placed in the way of the Hebrew exercising liberty of conscience in regard to his faith and the ritual which has been handed down through innumerable generations.

As, however, the Jew is a sharp, alert, merciless business man, and the Russian is dull, slothful, and easy-going, with the consequence that when the two meet in commercial rivalry the Hebrew invariably

gets the best of it, and the Muscovite has a pained consciousness he has been out-manœuvred and even tricked, the Russian Government has placed many disabilities upon the Jews, chiefly for economic reasons. The laws appertaining to the Jews are to hinder them entering into fair and equal competition with the Russians in regard to the professions, and to prevent the Jews spreading all over Russia. Money can do many things, and the rich Jew, under heavy fines, can trade in St. Petersburg and Moscow. But, generally speaking, Russian merchants have the trade of these two cities, because the Jews are prohibited from residence in them. In the great port of Odessa, where there is no such prohibition, practically the whole of the trade is manipulated by the Jews.

Only one region of the Empire is open to the Jew—Poland and fifteen of the adjoining Governments in Little and New Russia. This is the territory which we know as the "Jewish Pale." It is an area of over 300,000 square miles, with a population of over 33,000,000. To this must be added Poland, with over 43,000 square miles and 9,500,000 inhabitants. Now, of the 6,000,000 Jews in Russia, 1,500,000 are in Poland; nearly 4,000,000 are in the Russian Pale. Outside the Pale are about 275,000 Jews in European Russia, and over 100,000 in Asiatic Russia. The fact to be borne in mind is that in the population of the Pale, 42,000,000, the dominant race, which has the others within its grip in trade and employment, is the Jews, numbering about 5,000,000. The majority resent the

domination. The fact that the Jew has a quicker brain and more business aptitude has got nothing to do with it. Human nature being what it is causes the non-Jewish population to hate the Jews.

In the Russian heart is a constant quiver of terror of the Jews getting the upper hand. Naturally, therefore, out of a spirit of self-preservation—easy for the outsider to criticise if he is not under the dominance of the Jews—the Russian Government have for long pursued a policy of checking, curbing, and repressing Jewish expansion. The Jews are treated in a way which would make Englishmen set their teeth, straighten their lips, and tighten their fists. Most of the Jews accept the bullying as part of their inheritance. And, subject to all the ill-treatment, they prefer to live in Russia to a freer land, not because they like the ill-treatment, but because, as I have already said, they take that as a set-off to the success they have in commerce, which they would not have to so wide an extent in lands where the people are better equipped to meet them on their own ground. As a race the Jews are better off in Russia than the Russians themselves, and there is a half-understood gamble in the mind of the Jew between massacre and money-making. He is willing to take his chances of massacre so long as on the credit side he can bring his sharp wits into competition with the dull wits of the Russian and profit every time.

With a complete consciousness that, inferior though he be in numbers, the Jew would be "top dog" in the Empire if he got a chance, the Govern-

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ment chain him down. Accordingly there has been the policy of repression and compression—especially during the last quarter of a century. Jews living within the Pale have been chivvied from the villages into the towns. This has created pales within the Pale. Populations of Jewish towns have multiplied fourfold. The Russian villagers have partly been released from the oppression at the hands of the Jews—for whilst the Government oppress the Jews, the Jews crush the Russians whenever they get the chance—and the Jews are herded together in small towns, where it may have been difficult to live before, and it becomes infinitely more difficult, of course, when it is a case of dog-eat-dog in the scheme of compression forcing Jew to live on Jew.

Under the law, only the following classes of Jews are allowed to reside outside the Pale: (1) Merchants of the first guild; (2) persons with qualifying diplomas of the universities; (3) the Nicolai soldiers who have served for twenty-five years in the army, and their wives and children; (4) students of high educational institutions; (5) apothecaries, dentists, surgeons, and midwives; (6) skilled artisans.

This seems a fairly comprehensive list of exemptions. But all sorts of difficulties are put in the way of men who possess the qualifications obtaining the advantage of them. It is not that the authorities break the law in resisting admission, but because they sand the wheels of the law's machinery and will only apply oil when their own palms have been well greased by bribery to do the right thing.

Jewish merchants have to pay £90 a year to belong to a guild. It does not seem a large sum for a big merchant; but in all business transactions officials blackmail the merchants. There are a thousand delays until the way is smoothed by the usual means. The squeezing of the Jew is recognised as perfectly legitimate. I should be sorry to say there are no Russian officials above such conduct. But it is sufficiently prevalent and well understood for blackmail to be declared to be the practice. Bled though he be, the Jewish merchant gets ahead of the Russian, and some of the finest houses in Petersburg and Moscow are the residences of Jewish merchant princes.

In the universities, if the young Jews were given an equitable chance they would win everything. So the number of Jews allowed to enter is limited to ten per cent., and only after the most stringent examinations, which are not enforced upon the Russian students. As it is, a Jew always gets ahead in scholastic attainment. In the middle-class schools—the gymnasia, for instance—the Jewish pupils vary from five to ten per cent., whilst in the higher schools the numbers are kept down to three or five per cent.

The Jewish workman, usually the superior of the Russian, receives no encouragement. There is the natural and religious antipathy to the race, and fellow-workmen miss no opportunity of baiting their more industrious and sober Jewish mates.

Above all this, no State and no municipal office

is open to the Jew—not even the humble office of street sweeper. So far as the Government are concerned, they taboo Jewish employees, and the laws and the administrators of the law make it very hard for the Jews in other walks of life.

Every effort is made to smother Jewish enterprise. The consequence is that Russians suffer because professions and trades and industries in which Jews are superior, and in which, were they allowed elbow-room, they would advance, are severely restricted. By the very force of circumstances the Jews are small shopkeepers, men who trade on commission, and money-lenders. These are huddled in one part of Russia, making the competition keener and more heartless. The Jewish shopkeeper would be invaluable in the eastern Governments or provinces, where there are only Russians and very poor traders. But they are prohibited from going there. Where there are Jewish shops articles are cheaper than where there are only Russian shops. The Jew, content with small profits, can undersell his Russian neighbour right out of business. So it is not difficult to understand why a great body of Russian thought, eager for political equality and the rights of humanity, boggles at giving an open field to the Jews.

It is all very well, and most obvious, to tell the Russian that competition is healthy and good for the community. But the Russian, feeling that competition from the Jews means his own ruin, agrees with the commercial platitude, but nurses a strong mental reservation.

As regards agriculture, the Jew has done nothing —not entirely his own fault, nor because it has become a racial characteristic to earn a livelihood by other means than physical labour, but because he has not had the opportunity. It is true that the Russian peasant is badly treated, that he is subjected to extortion by the owners of the soil. But the Jew, if he had the chance—as it is, he is not allowed to own land—would be a harder taskmaster. I recognise, of course, that the treatment of the Jews—making them pay more than their fair share toward the maintenance of the Government, allowing them to be blackmailed by every official, forcing them to serve in the army, forbidding them to hold land, crowding them into certain areas, restricting their scope in industrial enterprise—has developed those very faults for possessing which we most stringently criticise them. They are within the Empire, but they cannot own an acre of ground. Nor is any endeavour made to develop the patriotic spirit.

It is, therefore, not surprising they are pullers of strings in the revolutionary and Socialistic movement, not because their real sympathies are either revolutionary or Socialistic, but because they hope to get freedom as the outcome of the existing system of government being rent in twain.

All the disabilities disappear, however, when the ancient faith is forsaken and allegiance is sworn to the Orthodox Church. Many Jews have followed this course, winning the contempt, however, of both Jew and Gentile, because a Jew is always a Jew,

POLISH JEWS.

and the renouncement is mean, on the surface and for personal advantage.

For centuries the centre of Hebrew life was the common religion, Judaism. But the social and commercial disabilities under which the Jews suffered led to the creation in 1897 of the General Jewish Working-men's Alliance for Russia and Poland—familiarly known as the Bund. At first the Bund was in alliance with the Social Democratic party. In 1903, however, there was a secession. The Bund, engineered by active, resourceful Jewish brains, is far-reaching in its operations, much more tactful than the frenzied, wild-talking Socialistic groups.

The Government is constantly feeling the lash of the Bund. It is an organisation with many ramifications, and the work is usually underground. The Government fears the Bund, and the harshest of measures are now being taken to crush it under heel. It is the Bund which is chiefly instrumental in smuggling forbidden literature into Russia. In the first three years of its existence it arranged 312 strikes, and in 91 per cent. of them was successful. The Bund was behind the great strikes of 1905—successful in bettering social conditions, but failures politically in the matter of advancing the revolutionary propaganda. Accordingly, the Bund held a full inquiry, followed by a conference and the passing of the following resolutions:—

> The immediate task of Socialism is to prepare the masses for a decisive conflict with absolutism in

the near future. As this may be the last, an attempt must be made to obtain the greatest amount of political influence at the moment absolutism falls. Therefore the local organisations are recommended to extend their activity to all classes of the proletariat and to strengthen their feelings of independence.

Agitation meetings and demonstrations must be improvised as frequently as possible (under the protection of armed groups). . . . The Jewish "*intelligenzia*" and *bourgeoisie* must be drawn to the party in order to give the revolutionary *régime* as democratic a character as possible.

The committees must convince the masses of the necessity of obtaining fire-arms and of learning how to use them. In this way they will be able to offer resistance to military and police. Well-armed fighting groups must be formed in every town, and local committees must assist workmen to obtain weapons *by every means in their power.*

The following literature must be distributed amongst the masses: (*a*) A survey of the events of January, 1905, throughout Russia, with special reference to the activity of the Bund. (*b*) A pamphlet explaining immediate needs and demands. (*c*) An account of the revolutions in Western Europe, laying special stress upon encounters between the people and the military.

The revolutionary movement in January (1905) did not reach the highest degree possible owing to the passivity of the non-Jewish proletariat and the absence of influential Social Democratic organisation. Therefore groups of non-Jewish workmen must be formed to circulate propagandist literature amongst

the non-Jewish masses. The present time is one of perpetual revolutionary agitation which may develop at any moment into a general rising. It is therefore *necessary to extend agitation to every possible quarter so that when the fitting opportunity arises the success of a general insurrection of the masses may be assured.*

It is also necessary to depart from the fighting methods hitherto employed and to adopt others of a more decisive and revolutionary character. *A general strike* is of immense importance, being a means of bringing the masses into the streets, and of obstructing the industrial and cultural life of Russia.

It is also necessary to organise demonstrations of armed masses in moments of strong revolutionary agitation in which attacks should be made upon Government buildings and upon the representatives of administrative and military power.

What is needed at the present moment is a united and general insurrection of Social Democrats throughout Russia in order to strengthen the political influence of the proletariat when the revolution takes place. To attain this end a coalition must be formed with all local Social Democratic organisations, which should convene a conference when the revolution actually takes place.

Propagandist literature must be circulated amongst the military, especially in localities where the soldiers are summoned in cases of disturbance.

The Bund chiefly operates from Warsaw, the capital of Poland. It is exceedingly active in Warsaw itself, and accordingly it was in Warsaw that I found the energies of the Government mainly

engaged, not in bringing peace, but in the ruthless rooting out of revolutionaries. Still, the conditions under which the Jews live in Poland are less severe than in Russia. No limitations prevail as to where they shall live, and no hindrances as to acquiring land. Indeed, many do become the owners of the estates long held by the needy Polish nobility. The Polish gentry, having lost their estates, turn to trade, only to find the Jews are ahead of them. So whilst the Pole hates the Russian, he hates the Jew much more. Yet while no love is lost between pure Pole and Polish Jew, the latter is enthusiastic as a Pole, and the bond of religion is not sufficient to overcome his dislike for the Russian, even though the Russian be also a Jew.

The Jew does not know how he stands before the law. He knows it is severe, that if vindictively applied his life is crushed out of him. So he develops a cringing manner before authority and readily pays to be left alone. Often there are popular outbursts against the Jews, partly religious, partly economic, generally egged on by the Government, who find a double use in ramping wrath, pillage, and massacre; terrorising the Jews, and distracting public attention from the doings of the Government itself.

Jews are among the most prolific of peoples. We hear much of Jewish emigration, but it does not come to more than 1 per cent. The Jew, however, is forbidden to emigrate, and few can afford the illegal fees by which they can obtain from officials fictitious passports allowing them to leave the

country. There is a considerable smuggling of Jews into German territory. I have seen them in Hamburg, mostly desirous to proceed to the United States. If they are in good health and have the requisite amount of money they are permitted. But if they are diseased, and likely to be turned back on reaching America, they are generally shipped to England, crowd into the East-End of London, become the victims of "sweaters," make more difficult the problem of overcrowding, and by cheap labour displace English workmen, who are forced into the ranks of the unemployed.

I spent some time in Minsk, a typical Jewish town within the Pale. The population is just over one hundred thousand. Sixty thousand are Jews; there are maybe ten thousand Poles, and the rest are Russians. It is a commercial centre; the streets are wide and fairly clean. With qualifications, it is not unlike an English town of the same size in a strictly manufacturing region. The Jews control the trade. The Chief of Police told me that in all the town only three shops belong to Russians.

In Minsk I found the Russian slow and blundering, lazy, fond of pleasure, generous to extravagance —when he has the means to be extravagant. The Jew was quick and calculating; he worked long and late; he lived on nothing and an onion. He became wealthy, but he never "splashed his money." He haggled and sold if he saw a clear profit of a kopek (about a farthing). The Russian fixed his price with a 50 per cent. profit; you can take the thing or leave it. You leave it, and go to the Jew.

The poorer Russian, I noted, has little antipathy to the Jew unless his religious animosity is roused. He sees in him the man who lets him have things cheaper than he can buy at the shop kept by his brother Russian. So in trade, unless the arm of the law keeps him out of the field of competition, the Hebrew merchant is the man who succeeds, and it is the Muscovite who is compelled to put up the shutters.

The wealthier classes hate the Jew, because it is to him they must run when in need of ready cash. The interest is high. Though ruin and agony come to the Russian, the Jew never abates a kopek of his due. The bed may be sold, and the Gentile child be left hungry, but the Jew must have what is in the bond.

When at the end of the commercial year the Russian finds he has done well, it is not of the advantages of banking that he always thinks. It is the possession of the means to have an orgie. He has his orgie; he continues it with borrowed money; when he comes to understand things he is in the grip of the Jew. Of course, he is a fool; but it is human nature that instead of blaming himself he curses the Jew.

The working man dislikes the Jew because he is not a worker with his hands. When, however, he is a worker, he is superior to the Russian. The Jew is the bargainer, the go-between, the man who gets something without honest work. And by this means the Jew grows rich whilst the Russian remains poor. The Russian, under conscription, must

serve several years in the Army. The Jew shirks the Army. The fertility of his brain in finding what are apparently perfectly valid reasons why he should not be a soldier is amazing. The Russian cannot argue against it. In words it is all right. But deeply soaked in his sluggish intellect is the conviction it is all a trickery which he cannot fathom.

That the governing classes abhor the Jews is proved every day. The manner in which the Jewish population is kept under lock and key as it were is first proof. There is no law for the Jew; he is badgered and blackmailed by every bully in uniform. If a Russian assaults a Jew, the Jew in complaining is treated as a liar.

The Russian Jew regards Russia as only a halting place for those who come out of Judæa. The huge mass of Jews within the Pale are sickeningly poor, for they are downtrodden by the Government, and they are sweated and ill paid by their fellow Israelites.

I know nothing more sad than to walk the streets of a Russian town and gaze into the faces of the passing Jews. The people look so mean and hungry, and they slink and are so shiver-gaited. They are hangdog in their glance. Centuries of oppression, of terror, have set a seal on the race. In Russia I have never seen a smile on a Hebrew countenance nor heard a merry laugh. In repose their faces are pictures of woe, of unutterable weariness. The iron has entered their souls. The Russian *moudjiks* are crushed, but they have no tradition

of their fathers that ever they were otherwise. The Jew has the sullenness of the ill-treated animal.

But in the brain of the Jew—though cringing and whining before his oppressors—blazes a clear fire of resentment. So when revolution began to smoulder and flame in Russia, the authorities knew it was the Jews who were fanning the terror.

The Jew is not courageous; he has not the pluck to be an assassin himself—not all a fault of race, but due in large measure to being an alien, and keeping alive not by resistance, but by submission to anyone who wished to kick him. He has the intellect, the craftiness of the East, the preference to do a thing by underground ways rather than boldly and in the open. He matures the revolution. It is the young and clever Jew who writes sedition; it is the old and wealthy Jew who finds the money for propaganda, for paying those who are the throwers of bombs to remove officials whose harshness has been inhuman.

Everybody in Russia knows this, and no section of the community have better knowledge of the fact than members of the Government. Accordingly, whilst to the Briton, reared under a Constitutional Government, assassination as a means to advance reform is abhorrent, it is very difficult to get into line and approve the tactics pursued by the Government. The rich Jew, by the usual means, can stave off inquiry into his relationship with the active revolutionists—and if there were inquiry, nothing would be found except money to say there was nothing.

Schemes to remove marked men are too carefully

laid for the assassin to be caught, especially in Jewish districts. Somebody, however, has to be shot, and half a dozen young Jews—revolutionists, no doubt, at heart, sympathetic toward the principle of freedom by murder, but possibly quite ignorant of the plans of "removal"—are laid by the heels, easily convicted, because the trials are secret, and are done to death. The Secret Police gain kudos in foreign lands for their skill in laying their hands on the murderers, whereas the murderers have gone scot free, and it is the innocent who have paid the penalty.

Outside strictly official classes I have not come across a single person in Russia who is not absolutely sure that uprisings of ignorant Russians against the Jews, and the horrible massacres which followed, have not been brought about by the machinations of the police. What better, when Jew and Gentile are of one mind and working against the Government, than to stir up religious hatred, arrange that a gun shall be fired during the progress of a Russian Orthodox Church procession, and spread the news that the Jews have fired upon an *ikon* of the Mother of God!

The illiterate Russian is superstitious, and in his way exceedingly religious, and for the Faith to be insulted is to rouse in him all the brutish barbarity of the Russian nature. It causes him to run maniacally vindictive amongst those who he thinks have given the affront. He bashes the lives out of them with bludgeons, men are downed and trodden to death with iron-studded boots grinding into their mouths, women disembowelled, infants seized by the leg and

their brains scattered by a bang on the pavement. And the soldiers, instead of stopping the slaughter, join in it. In writing this I am not venturing into sensationalism. I do not write some of the stories which have been poured into my ears by those who have seen these things and worse. As I listened I felt cold and shivered. I could only cover my face with my hands and try to smudge the holocaust from my mind.

Meetings to criticise the action of the authorities are prohibited in Russia. But meetings are held, nevertheless. There was one held beyond the township of Minsk. It was of the Russian civilian population. It was decided that the Russians should no longer be the tools of the authorities, nor allow themselves, because of a gunshot, prearranged by the police, to lose their senses and to lay bloody hands upon the Jews. One Saturday afternoon I heard of a meeting in the Minsk Town Hall, sanctioned by the police because it was unpolitical. It was a gathering to hear an address on the Zionist movement. As I got near I noticed two things: First, that the people promenading the adjoining public gardens—it was the Jewish Sabbath, and therefore general holiday—were giving the building a wide berth. Second, that the Town Hall had a muster of cavalry in front of it. The people were keeping away in fear there might be shooting, and the soldiery were present to be ready to shoot if the meeting should become political.

To call a meeting for the most innocent of purposes is usual in Russia; to have the place crowded

with those against the Government — save a few dozen soldiers ready for eventualities—for the lights to be extinguished, and then for violent revolutionary harangues to be delivered in the dark, so the police cannot mark the men down, and the proceedings to be of wild enthusiasm. Three or four Russian officers were standing in the doorway as well as a couple of men who had something to do with the meeting. "Why are all the soldiers about?" I asked one of the latter. He looked slily at the officers, and then answered with a smile: "I think it is to give the horses some exercise; they always have a better appetite when they stand about in front of the Town Hall." His endeavour at humour drew black scowls from the military.

There was a gathering held outside the railway station at Minsk to discuss the kind of delegates that should be sent to the Duma. Of course, it was attended by troops. The meeting passed off quietly, and folks were beginning to disperse when the order was given for the soldiers to open fire. Soldiers were on three sides of the crowd, and the station buildings were behind. The fusillade lasted for ten minutes. Over one hundred people were killed, and between two and three hundred were wounded. A few months ago the late Governor, General Kurloff, gave orders that for three days everybody should remain within doors. Anyone who ventured into the streets was shot down.

On the surface all is quiet in Minsk; but there is a very strict police order that all doors and gateways be locked at sundown. This is to prevent

anybody who might wreak vengeance on the police or soldiery in the streets from disappearing hurriedly beyond the reach of pursuing bullets.

Arrests of Jewish "politicals" are frequent. They do not take place in the daytime. A house is surrounded at night; the police quietly force an entrance; they capture the man they are after, push him into a cab and drive away. Nothing is heard of the man again. He has gone mysteriously, nobody knows where, just as though he were not. If relatives go to the police station to make inquiries there is a parade of ignorance, and they are driven off. If they persist in their inquiries they run the risk of being arrested themselves. The Minsk Police Station is quiet and nigh deserted in the daytime. All night it flares with lights; all is bustle; there is the hurried going and coming of gendarmes; closed carriages drive up, and prisoners are rushed into the building.

Making it a point to hear both sides, I called on the Chief of Police in Minsk. At the time he was absent, but I ran across a minor official, the chief secretary, a slim, beady-eyed, fluffy-haired man, whose ignorance was in proportion to his assurance. He provided an example of the stupid individuals who too often have power in small Russian communities. He was an anti-Semite. Almost his first words consisted of a torrent of abuse of the Jews.

"We will crush, crush them," he exclaimed with passion; "we will crush them under our heels if they dare raise their hands," and he became

white, and ground his knuckles vindictively into a blotting-pad before him.

"Oh," said I; "I have been spending the whole morning talking to Jews, and I have found them quiet, well-behaved, reasonable people."

"I know you have," was the retort; "they must have been talking revolution to you. Don't say a word against the Government; don't say a word, I tell you, or we shall put you in prison. It doesn't matter whether you are a foreigner or not. We shall not allow anybody to speak against the Government."

"And if you put me in prison will you give me plenty to eat and plenty of cigars?" I inquired.

"You are making fun of the Government. Who are you; why do you come here? A passport! Pooh, everybody has a passport! You have been talking to lying Jews. Why do you listen to their side of the case?"

"I'm here now in the police office to hear your side of the case," I added.

"What are your opinions about the Government?" he demanded.

"Nay; I'm a seeker after information," I remarked; "so what are your opinions about the Government?"

"We never mention the Government; if you talk about the Government you will be arrested." And so on—a stream of the bitter, bigoted invective of an official reeking with hatred of the people amongst whom he was living.

Later I spent a pleasant hour with the Chief

of Police, a smart, dapper, white-tunicked officer, who smoked innumerable cigarettes and talked incessantly at the top of his voice. He was a man of the world, but he was an official. And a Russian official is always rosy. Yes, there was some trouble in other parts of the Empire, but Minsk—strange, wasn't it, that Minsk was the quietest place in all Russia? Quite so, quite so; yes, it was true that three days ago in the main street at midday eleven men set upon a post office man, killed him, got away with eight thousand roubles, and that none of the murdering robbers had been caught. They were Jews—they must be Jews! But that robbery was a thing which might happen anywhere. The prisons; ah, yes, the prisons were crowded, and fresh buildings were being utilised. But that was all in the interests of quietude—it really explained why Minsk was so quiet. Indeed, according to the Chief of Police I had wandered into the Happy Valley in coming to Minsk—only all the facts happened to be against him.

Facts in Russia, however, are what the officials report, and not what you happen to know. You may have seen a thing, but if the authorities, for reasons of their own, deny it, then the thing has never had any existence except in the mind of someone who wants to do an injury to the Government. However, the Chief of Police was very affable and very courteous.

The Jew being the intellectual man in Russia, whatever he does is suspect. Keep late hours, get drunk occasionally, let your morals be un-

certain, and you are left alone in Russia. It is evident you are performing the ordinary duties of citizenship. But be studious, spend your evenings reading books and drinking weak tea, and you are regarded as a plotter against the stability of the Government. So Jews and students are anathema to the authorities, who worry them into the revolutionary ranks by always treating them as though they were revolutionaries.

In Minsk, as, indeed, in all Russian towns where there are Jews, I found the Israelites the quietest, most docile folk imaginable. They are neither handsome nor addicted to excessive cleanliness. The men, with their greasy coats and dirty fingers and grime in the crevices of their necks, and the Jewish women, ill-shapen, all the married ones with shaven heads and wearing wigs—despoiled of what beauty they possess, so they have no attraction in the eyes of other men—were repulsive to the eye, were cringing and whining.

The Czar would do well by the Jews if he had the power. He has made concessions to them. He has directed that Jews should be entitled to become officers in the Russian Army. Every Russian officer shudders at the prospect. I saw no evidence, however, that Jews are anxious to be officers and direct Russian soldiers in the shooting down of other Jews.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MOODS OF MOSCOW.

The Police and their Guns—A Veneer of Indifference—Coldness towards the Czar—The Picture-Postcard Craze—Assassination a generally-approved Weapon—The Grand Duke Sergius—An English Lady's Recollections of the Strike Horrors—Constitutionalists, Revolutionaries, and Terrorists—Booming Trade—Nervousness among Bankers—Coercion—No Room for a Policy of Moderation—The Police and Blackmail—Corruption everywhere.

If you really want to know the time it is not advisable to seek the information from a Moscow policeman. All the police are armed with guns. If your approach gives the constable suspicion, he has a right to order you to keep back. If you do not keep back, he is within his right to shoot you.

As the streets of the ancient capital of Muscovy are heavily cobbled—good as a jolting digestive when taking a droshki drive after dinner, to say nothing of the cobbles having uses in times of riot—motoring has little chance of popularity. But well-to-do Muscovians love to dash through the picturesque ways at the speed of a Saratoga trotting match. If a driver does not pull up on the first order from a policeman, he can be pulled down by a speeding bullet.

Soldiers guard all the banks and public buildings. Within the doorway of the chief Post Office are two boxes of sand. The sand is there to be handy to mop up the mess if it is found necessary to shoot anybody.

The landlord of my hotel was tearful. In the autumn his place was crowded with British, German, French, and American tourists. Two hundred engaged rooms in the spring, but all engagements cancelled. Not a single holiday-maker had shown his face in 1906.

I was the only man in the hotel to read the London newspapers when they arrived. Occasionally they were disfigured with black splotches, obliterating remarks or intelligence which the Russian Censor thinks should not reach the eyes of subjects of the Czar. "Making caviare" is the sarcastic manner in which Russians refer to these smears; the obliterated column is rather like caviare. Obliteration is needless, for the average Russian does not understand English, whilst the educated man who can read it always has the means at his command of seeing an uncensored copy of the journal.

On the whole, when you piece this and that together, the shootings, the arrests, the raidings, the secret meetings, you make a mosaic which suggests that to step outside the door in Moscow is to run risk of being shot.

Truth to tell, however, unless somebody enlightened you, it was possible to go about Moscow for long days and not be conscious you were in a cauldron of revolution. There was no open talking

of politics. Business was lively. The Orthodox churches, gaudy with decoration, were crowded with the devout and superstitious, seeking to kiss relics of the saints. The swaddled droshki drivers anathematised one another at every street corner. The fashionable cafés were crowded each night, and blustering prodigality of hospitality made the hours noisy until three or four o'clock in the morning.

The real Moscow is hidden beneath a veneer of indifference.

"How are things in Moscow?" I inquired from casual acquaintances.

"Quiet, very quiet," was the reply, not because it was so, but because there was a natural suspicion of the stranger who, under the guise of guilelessness, might be a spy.

I noticed a marked change in the temper of the people since last I was in Moscow four or five years before. Then the name of the Czar stirred enthusiasm; now it was mentioned with coldness. Among educated people there was no personal resentment. It was recognised that Nicholas II. would do much to meet the demands of the liberal-minded among his subjects, but that he is hindered by the Grand-Ducal party who exercise a tremendous influence, and have got most to lose in giving the people a voice in the control of affairs.

The picture-postcard craze is as prevalent in Moscow as in London. The shop windows were full of photographs of members of the smothered Duma. There were no picture-postcards of the Czar and Czarina. But the police had searched

the shops and confiscated all photographs taken during the bitter strife of the winter of early 1906, when many a stretch of snow was made red with the blood of those who went down beneath the blows of Cossack sabres.

What I found difficult to understand, and what I am sure thousands of excellent people in England find it impossible to understand, is the general acquiescence in the principle that in Russian politics assassination is a proper weapon. I am not referring to the "Reds," as the revolutionists are called. I got my impressions from those to whom brutality is just as abhorrent as to the most law-abiding citizen who may read this chapter. Again and again, when I expressed my disgust with politics which mean shooting a defenceless man in the back, or throwing bombs which often miss the man intended for death and kill the innocent, I was told:

"You don't understand, you don't understand; you have got to live in Russia to understand."

I went within the quaint walls of the Kremlin, and saw the spot—marked by a wreath and a flickering lamp, and surrounded by a cheap wooden rail—on which the Governor-General of Moscow, the Grand Duke Sergius, was blown to atoms by a bomb. I mentioned the fact at dinner.

"Ah, yes," laughed a man; "a monument is to be erected there—but the public are showing no haste to subscribe."

"Do you know," said an English lady, "that, though the thing was horrible, I never heard a

single person in Moscow say 'Poor fellow'? He crushed the people; his was the iron fist, and the people answered by the only means they could."

"Oh," observed another English lady, "I saw a lot of the fighting during the strikes. All the vodki shops were closed; the strikers prohibited their fellows from drinking, and they shot those who were caught at it. But the Cossacks were given authority to break into the vodki shops and drink as much as they liked. They got so drunk they wobbled on their horses. It would have been very laughable if it had not been so awful. Then they would dash down a street, killing women and children or men who ran away—they were frightened of men who faced them. The Cossacks were at all the street corners, and shot at anybody who tried to cross. There was an old man—and he was so nervous. He got on his knees, and tried to crawl. I watched him from our window. Then he lay flat. He slowly lifted his head to see if the soldiers were looking. He was afraid, and crawled back. He rolled himself in the snow, so he would be white, and then very, very slowly, lying on his face, he pulled himself across. It seemed an hour. Oh, I did thank God when the old man got across. I thought a friend of mine was killed, and I went out to seek him. In the snow I found a baby's arm, cut in two, the little hand, blue with the frost, nearly a yard from the arm. I think the baby must have been on its mother's breast when a mounted soldier cut at her. I had such trouble getting into the place where the dead were stored

BARRICADES IN MOSCOW.

—piled up, disfigured, frozen bodies—mostly women and children. The soldiers were throwing them out to be removed for burial. They just fell with a thud, the hard body on the hard ground—I can never get out of my ears the sounds of those thuds."

"If you consult a Moscow doctor," whispered an Englishman who has lived many years in Russia, "he will tell you about the tremendous number of ladies who have nervous breakdowns. In their hysteria they always talk about seeing blood."

"In England," said another man, "I suppose I am a Tory of the old blue school. Here in Russia —well, I think I am becoming a rank revolutionist. I shall have to pay a visit to England, if only to preserve my political sanity. You folk in England lump together everybody who is against the Government as revolutionists, wretched people who throw bombs. And it is the policy of the Russian Government to stimulate that idea abroad, for they know foreign opinion is against assassination. Though, broadly speaking, everybody in Russia who is not in the employ of the Government is against the Government; and though the land is riddled with parties, there are only three of which you need take notice. There are the Constitutionalists, the better-class, educated people who want to put a stop to the evils of bureaucracy by having a Constitutional Government. There are the revolutionaries who are convinced constitutional agitation is no good—because the Government will not permit criticism of themselves—who pick out the officials

who rule by terrorism, and in their secret conclaves condemn them to death. The revolutionaries make it a point not to injure the innocent. They warn the innocent to keep out of the way. They warned the Grand Duchess not to go driving with Sergius, because he was to be killed. He was assassinated by the revolutionaries. Then there are the Terrorists, the men who are not only against the Government, but against society, and who hope to profit in the anarchy and chaos which will follow a general upheaval. The revolutionaries repudiate the attempted assassination of Stolypin, which had so many innocent victims. That was the work of the Terrorists. No doubt there is a certain overlapping between the three parties, but people at home make a great mistake in jumbling together as enemies of all law and order everybody who is not a defender of the present system of government."

With the increasing undercurrent of unrest it would be safe to assume that trade in Moscow is at a standstill. Nothing of the sort. There is plenty of trade, booming trade; but the prosperity is a flare-up before expected Nemesis.

Moscow is the commercial centre of the Empire. It is to Russia what Great Britain is to the world. Moscow merchants have a hand in the business of interchange of goods all over Russia, and some of the profit sticks to their fingers. Following the war in the Far East, with the Russian Army monopolising the trans-Siberian Railway, Siberia is struggling to make up two and a half years of checked trade. The

demand is good. Besides, with the prospect of a general strike, with all means of communication closed, merchants in other parts of Russia are keen to be supplied with wares, and are doing what they have never done before, offering ready money. So the cotton mills in the Moscow district are working at high pressure—magnificent mills, finely equipped, some of them employing between ten and fifteen thousand hands, the managers Englishmen as a rule —mills which would be a surprise to many people in Lancashire. But all this is a fictitious kind of prosperity, consequent upon dread, and will instantly break down either when the dread passes or is realised. Credit with foreign countries, however, is slipping to nil, and neither British nor Continental firms will send goods to Russia except on cash with the order. A change has come over the banking community. Two years, and even one year, ago all Russian bankers agreed that safety lay in supporting the Government, for only by keeping the Government strong and stable could their own stability and strength be assured. Nowadays there is a marked nervousness among bankers.

The air is full of suspicion. Whilst men are willing and even eager to talk politics, there is always the wonder behind the words whether the other man is not a spy, and if some night the gendarmes will make a grab. There is prevailing distrust, and as the police generally know what is going on in the secret societies, factory hands are positive the Government have hundreds of spies among the workers. Any movement for an increase of wages

is vigorously repressed. An operative said to me: "I am afraid to ask for ten kopeks more (2½d.), for that in these days is counted revolutionary politics, and I might be arrested because I am discontented, and therefore a dangerous person."

Without police permission, it is unlawful for more than five persons to assemble. Still, meetings are held. The word is passed, and in some dark and dingy room, ill-ventilated, a couple of hundred men will crowd and listen to fiery speeches, and give each other courage. Sometimes the police bag the whole lot. One Sunday there was a meeting in the woods outside Moscow. There was no advertising, yet over two thousand people wended their way to a certain spot. The speeches were temperate. They had to do with elections for the Duma. The plea was that the people should return the same delegates as they did to the late Duma. There was warning against those who would urge compromise. "Mark them as enemies of the people," was the order. Now and then came interruptions from Anarchist maniacs, excited demands for impossible things. "Shut up, you fools!" was the genial comment of the crowd. The meeting was well behaved, and extremists and gore advocates were shouted down. I have attended many not-dissimilar meetings in England. The difference between such gatherings in England and Russia is that whereas in England the meaning goes no further than the words, it goes much further in Russia. The propaganda is in secret and in small rooms. A big meeting is really an exhibition of strength. It provides the courage of numbers. Not

A CORNER OF MOSCOW IN TIME OF RIOT.

a word was said against the Government. There were too many spies about.

"Why," I asked one of the men, "won't you accept compromise? Why are you wanting all the loaf at once? The Government are composed of Russians; surely they wish the prosperity of Russia quite as much as you do. Why do you not accept their word and believe that although everything cannot be given at once you will one of these days have a system of government like that in England?"

He just laughed. "We are not going to get anything at all in Russia until all who have now the controlling power are sent either to heaven or to hell. We cannot call our souls our own; we cannot discuss affairs of our country without risk of Siberia; we are taxed down to the last kopek; we are blackmailed by every petty official; we have no freedom of the press; if anybody in authority does us wrong we have no redress. Oh, yes, it is all very well for you English writers to talk about respect for law and authority, but if you had to put up with half we suffer you would be throwing bombs right and left. Don't go and write all Russians are assassins. We are not. We hate bomb throwing just as much as you do. It is the only argument that is left to us"

In the streets of Moscow I looked at the policemen resting upon their rifles. Respectable men will not join the police; there is too much risk from the revolver of a revolutionary. The police are recruited from the ne'er-do-wells. Their pay is little. So they blackmail. A droshki driver has to give

something to the policeman or he will get into trouble for furious driving. A ragamuffin, selling apples from the gutter, was being browbeaten by a policeman. "I haven't got fifteen kopeks—I haven't sold any apples," whimpered the boy.

"You've got to give me fifteen kopeks," said the constable.

And from the drunken policeman pilfering kopeks from an apple boy right up to the greatest in the land the story of corruption and bribery and brutality is the same. The Grand Duchess, wife of the murdered Grand Duke Sergius, a good woman, concerned herself with sending medical comforts to the wounded in Manchuria. One day she made a surprise visit to the railway station as boxes were being sent off, and directed some to be opened: nothing but stones and general rubbish! A distinguished and philanthropic Russian gave 100,000 roubles to the wounded. He was given a receipt for 30,000 roubles. He complained to the Czar. That night—presumably by direction of those who had appropriated the difference—the philanthropist was murdered in his hotel.

But a Russian is a Russian whether he wears the uniform of a Governor or the red shirt of a revolutionary. I have met both, and have found them charming to me, a stranger. But I have heard them speak of one another, and there was no love. I have seen something of the actions of the two classes toward one another, and hate was behind them all. To have the power to crush the other—that seems the dominant passion in the rival hearts.

I see in both classes an Oriental disregard for human life. And as I have listened to a sweet-tongued revolutionary talking about the rights of humanity I have wondered: Will the Russian change his character if he changes the machinery of government?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CZAR.

His Temperament—His Unlucky Month—A Man of Peace—His Dilemma—The Grand Dukes—The Czar as a Worker—The Simple Life—The Empress—The Irony of Fate.

NICHOLAS II. is neither the callous monster nor the short-sighted fool he is often represented to be. He is a kindly-hearted, well-meaning gentleman, who would like Russia to be peaceful, would go a long way in sacrificing his royal prerogative to secure it; but he is weak, lacking initiative, irresolute in decision, commands and countermands, is vacillating, and is rather sick of the whole business.

The Romanoffs, the Russian Royal house, have usually been men of overbearing, brutal character, big and brawny, and with the grand manner.

The Czar has none of these qualities. A slight, short man physically, often in bad health, he takes after his mother, the Dowager Empress, sister to Queen Alexandra. He is nervous, impressionable, mercurial, jolly one hour, in the depths of depression the next, is glad to have somebody to make up his mind for him, holds by that till somebody else comes along and turns him the other way. He is religious in a superstitious way. He accepts omens; he con-

THE CZAR. THE CZARINA.

A ROYAL GROUP

PRINCE ALEXIS.

THE ROYAL CHILDREN.

stantly consults a clairvoyant—indeed, one is in close attendance—and he believes in good days and bad months.

The month of May he abhors. All the sad and evil events of his life have occurred in May. He was born in May and crowned in May. It was in May that an attempt was made on his life in Japan; it was in May, at the time of his coronation, that nearly five thousand peasants were crushed to death in Moscow. It was in May, the 26th, the very anniversary of his coronation, that the Russian fleet was annihilated by the Japanese warships. He is always moody in May.

As original convener of the Hague Conference, he is a man of peace. Stories of war terrorise him. The savage repressive acts done in his name and under his authority are the result of his feelings having been worked upon by those who are closest to his ear. He has little bursts of petulance, now and then displays petty tyranny, suddenly changes, is exceedingly kind, and stories of distress bring tears to his eyes.

Whatever the Czar may do will be injurious to himself. If he fails to yield to the demands of the revolutionaries his life will be attempted and possibly lost. If he does yield, his relatives, the Grand Dukes, will see to his undoing. He knows not which way to turn.

If the Grand Dukes could be exiled, the Czar would willingly make large concession to the popular demands. The Grand Dukes pull the strings. They are the Romanoff family, and Nicholas is their tool.

When he is disposed to be conciliatory they arrange fictitious plots against his life, and force him to draw back. There are good Grand Dukes; but, as a body, they are the party of obstacle in the direction of national amelioration. They have fabulous incomes from the taxes; they are steeped in corruption; they get their share of "squeeze" in all Government works; they appropriate public funds to their own use. It is not simply because they desire to maintain the autocratic power of the Romanoffs that they exercise a sinister influence upon the Czar, but their own dominant authority and their great incomes would inevitably shrink if the people of Russia had an effective voice in administration.

An enormous amount of work is thrown upon the shoulders of the Czar. As far as his powers go he shirks nothing. He rises early—very early for a Russian—and between seven and eight he is at his desk. He likes to work in a small room, and there he drinks much black coffee and smokes many full-flavoured cigars. He works quietly, assiduously, for two or three hours, reading and signing documents, and rarely converses with his secretaries. Then he exercises—usually a stiff game of tennis with young officers. He has early lunch with his family—no guests are ever invited to lunch—and at noon he receives Ministers, Governors, and other high officials, always by appointment. Not being remarkable for strength of character, he generally concedes requests. Coming in contact with conflicting interests, his decisions are sometimes contradictory.

Neither the Emperor nor the Empress—daughter of Princess Alice, and therefore niece to King Edward—cares for the high, sombre formality of the Russian Court. They prefer to reside in small châlets, little larger than cottages, in the grounds of their palaces, rather than in the palaces themselves. Everything is simple and home-like. The decorations are of the plainest. Formerly they took their part in State functions, had banquets, State balls, and the like. But of very recent years they have gradually allowed these things to drop out of their lives. Apart from the absolutely necessary duties of their station they live the uneventful life of a country gentleman and his wife, and make their chief concern and interest the care of their children. The favourite residence at present is Peterhof, about twenty-five miles from Petersburg and on the Gulf of Finland. Occasional cruises are made on the Royal yacht; halts are made in the bays of the innumerable islands; the Emperor and his friends shoot a little; the Empress and her children gather flowers.

The presence of strangers is not congenial to Emperor or Empress. Neither of them is a good conversationalist, and formal visits are irksome and the talk halting. The visitor is made to sit, whilst the Emperor walks about the room. It is his place to make conversation, and there are often painful silences. Sometimes a daring visitor will snap through the cord of Court decorum and chattily tell some experience. The Royal couple are rather pleased than otherwise the icy stiffness has been

broken. The Emperor has his likes and dislikes. He will take a fancy to a man; but it will be short-lived, and the friend is dropped. He is so nervous he cannot trust anyone.

The Empress gives each morning to her children. For years she was not in popular favour, first because her manner was cold and she took little interest in the gorgeous functions which are the delight of official Russians, and secondly because as the children were born they were all girls and there was no heir. But since the birth of the little Prince Alexis she has come through the cloud of disfavour. In the afternoon the Empress usually sits in the same room as the Emperor, sewing, whilst her husband is transacting affairs of State with his Ministers. He likes to have the Empress near him. The Emperor shows great industry in what is little other than clerks' work. When a problem is put before him for decision he shrinks from the responsibility. He gets someone else to decide, and on the ultimate result the favour of that man depends.

The evening is invariably spent quietly. Emperor and Empress dismiss their gentlemen and ladies, retire to a cosy room, and there, whilst the Empress sews garments for her children, the Emperor smokes and reads. All their personal inclinations are towards what is called a humdrum life.

Perhaps it would be better if the Czar were a man of resolute and iron character, a statesman, a man who would form a policy and pursue it, despite consequences.

Among the many tragedies of Russia, not the

least is that of the Autocrat—whose word is indeed law—who is genial but weak, and has been placed by a cynical destiny in the position of wielding greater power than any other man on earth. He is as he was made; and he is as much the victim of circumstance as the poorest of his wretched subjects.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GREAT FAIR AT NIJNÌ-NOVGOROD.

Revival of the Great Fair—A Congress of Russian Mussulmans—A Talk with Ali Merdan Bey—Tartars Demanding Representative Government—Their Grievances—Tartars as Merchants—A Great Show of Skins—Oriental Bargaining—A Motley Multitude—West and East—Tombstones and Ikons—Postcards by the Billion—Obscene Pictures.

I REACHED Nijnì-Novgorod in time to see the greatest fair in the world in full swing.

The building of railways, especially the trans-Siberian line, spanning a continent, is supposed to have scotched the annual gathering of men from the Far East, bartering their furs and gold and precious stones from the Ural Mountains and from Persia for the gaudy cottons, sewing machines, gramophones, and other products of Western civilisation.

Besides, the German commercial traveller is abroad in the land. In my wanderings I have met him in distant corners of Siberia, seeking orders for anything, from American threshing machines to the cheapest of Swiss watches. So the need of Nijnì-Novgorod fair, conveniently situated on the edge of Russia's finest highway, the Volga River, is said to be waning.

Maybe. But certainly during the last two and a half years neither the German commercial traveller nor his wares have had much chance to get along the trans-Siberian road. Now that the twin-line of steel, running for 6,000 miles from Moscow to Vladivostok, is free from the conveyance of troops the Siberian towns, which have been starving for goods, are demanding large supplies and speedy deliveries. In the disturbed condition of the country, however, German firms—which in times of peace fared badly as a consequence of their three years' credit system—have shown no eagerness to risk the lives of their travellers in a region where the value of life is decreasingly regarded, nor to forward goods for which there is a very problematic prospect of payment. Accordingly, Mahomet has had to come to the mountain, and last year Nijnì-Novgorod basked in its old glory.

The fair provided opportunity for a remarkable gathering, a Congress representing 20,000,000 Mussulmans in the Russian Empire: Moslems from South Russia, men who had taken to the garb and customs of the West and who, with hair cropped *à la Français* and imperials and dark grey lounge jackets and patent leather boots, might easily be mistaken for Parisians; Moslems from Mongolia and Bokhara, men slim and sallow and sedate, with shaven heads and henna-dyed beards, men in long flowing and embroidered sheepskin coats, boots of red, and turbans of green, and who, sitting, find the floor more comfortable than chairs.

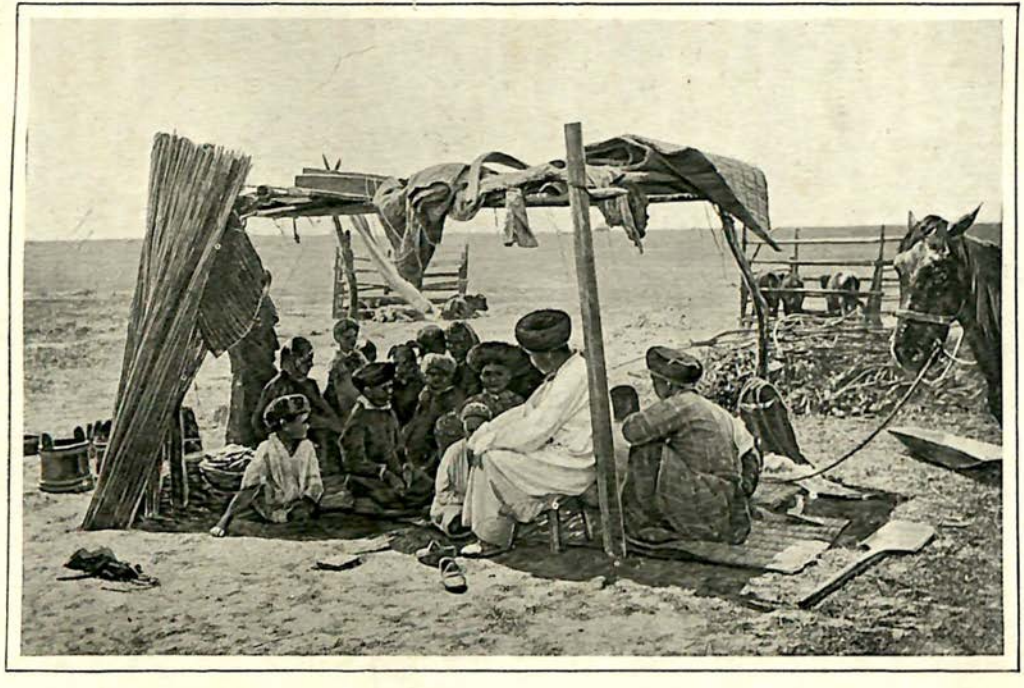
An attempt at a Congress was made in 1905.

Few Mussulmans attended, and those who did were prohibited by the Government from meeting. The Government were politely defied, for the Moslems took passage on a steamer running up the Oka, a tributary of the Volga, journeying one day as far as Biasniki, and returning to Nijnì-Novgorod the next, the Congress having, in the meantime, been informally held on board.

But the assemblage in 1906 was the first genuine Congress representative of all Mahommedan subjects of the Czar. The president was Ali Merdan Bey, Toptchibachef of Baku, on the Caspian Sea. He represented Baku in the late Duma, and was to be brought to trial for signing the seditious Viborg manifesto, which was the red-hot answer of the delegates, framed in a Finland hotel, to the action of the Czar in surrounding the Taurida Palace with troops and hindering the members of the Duma from further talk.

For the better part of a day I was in close conversation with Ali Merdan Bey, and to me he voiced the grievances of his Tartar co-religionists. The point that shone through all the talk was the assertion of nationality—a thing marked in the history of the world at present, which I have found vented all over the globe, in Finland, in the Balkans, Bulgaria, Servia, Macedonia, in Hungary, and at home in Ireland, and even in Wales—a struggle, sometimes peaceful, often bloody, to bring out national individuality.

Here, then, in East Russia, I found the Tartars, Oriental of the Orientals, all athirst for represen-



TARTARS IN ASTRAKHAN.

tative government, and their spokesman quoting John Stuart Mill to me. Those having some acquaintance with the workings of the Oriental mind, and knowing it is power and not reason which influences the Oriental, must smile at the world-wide itch for Parliaments and palaver having reached the Kirghees and other hordes of the steppes of Siberia. In the dead Duma there sat twenty-four Tartars, though thirty-six were elected; twelve had to come from constituencies which necessitated months of travel, and they did not reach Petersburg in time to find the Duma alive.

One complaint of Ali Merdan Bey was that the Russians did not know the Tartars, did not try to understand them, refused to recognise them as really more intellectual than themselves, and treated them as savages. No Tartar had ever been made a member of the Imperial Council, nor appointed as a Governor. The Government, I was assured —just as they set Christians and Jews against one another in Western Russia — were ever stirring animosity between Christians and Mussulmans in eastern parts of the Empire, so there could be no concerted action, however friendlily the two races might be inclined, and indeed were in most places. At the Technical Institute in Petersburg one tenth only are allowed to be students. At the Medical Institute for Women only five per cent. are allowed to be Tartars. It is prohibited that the minaret of a mosque should be higher in a village than the bulbous tower of a Russian Orthodox Church. The Cross rises from the dome of Russian churches,

but in all Moslem populations the Crescent is fixed below the Cross, and thus is offensive to all Mahommedans.

The decisions of the Congress in Nijnì-Novgorod were (1) that the Tartars should return the same delegates to the Duma as before, and refuse to have anything to do with nominees of the Government; (2) that a Tartar party be formed in the Duma, and its members act in concert; (3) that the Mahommedan religion be taught in State schools in Moslem areas, and in the Tartar tongue, for at present many Tartar children are left in ignorance because religious scruples prevent parents allowing their children to be taught the Orthodox faith; (4) that Tartars should have exactly the same rights as other subjects of the Czar; (5) that they be allowed to have Tartar societies—for under the existing law even societies for philanthropic purposes are prohibited.

The Tartars are the 'cutest merchants who come to Nijnì-Novgorod. In "deals" the Jew gets ahead of the Russian elsewhere; but in Nijnì-Novgorod no Jew has a chance. He is an infant in commerce alongside the Tartar. For whilst the Jew makes his money by foresight, the Tartar gets ahead by craftiness.

Whether it be the selling of "overland tea"—believed by the Muscovite to have been brought by caravan from China, but which has been sent round by ship to Odessa and trained to Nijnì—or in making a deal with precious stones, which he hints have been stolen from the mines, and

therefore to be obtained as a bargain, but which are imitations made in a Parisian factory, the Tartar scores.

He stands by his shed or stall, looking cold and grimy, his fur cap over his ears and his hands hid in the sleeves of his skin coat, which is badly tanned and most unappetising in odour. He has wondrous stacks of skins, from silver fox down to rat.

You can walk the better part of a mile past shops crowded with skins, most of them requiring to be cured. For a year Siberia is hunted for skins to supply the Nijnì-Novgorod mart. The tribes of the north stalk in the winter; colonies of political exiles have sometimes little other means of winning a livelihood than getting skins. Over hundreds of miles of trackless snow the skins are hauled till a river is reached. Then by boat they are brought to some place where the trans-Siberian Railway can be touched, or are taken to some affluent of the Volga.

The Tartar merchant has his buyers everywhere. In his slothful, but still methodical, way he meets the skins at certain points, and arrives at Nijnì-Novgorod with perhaps a couple of thousand pounds' worth of goods.

The market is conducted on strictly Eastern principles. There is no fixed price. Everything is worth what it will fetch. The Tartar asks twice as much as a thing is worth, aware all the time you know he is asking double what he will accept. You offer half what the thing is worth, aware that he knows you intend to increase the offer. So much

time is wasted by him regretfully lowering his price, and you grudgingly raising your offer, until at the end you come very near, if not actually, to the price you both know to be about right.

There are splashes of the picturesque about the people who attend the fair. They have come from all points of the compass, by the slow and dirty Russian trains, by the huge commodious, shallow-drafted and naphtha-driven Volga boats—quite as big as the notorious floating-towns on American streams —and by caravan.

Russians from the towns are dressed European style on the German model; Russians from the country are in wide trousers and top boots, flapping red shirts and thick belts; they are bearded, whilst the hair is cropped straight and the back of the neck shaved. Their women-folk are plain, stout, figureless, and have shawls tied about their heads. There are the brown-cloaked, sheepskin-hatted Persians from below the Caucasus Mountains; there are almond-eyed Mongols, shrivel-faced and wisp-whiskered; there are tawny Buriats, and gay-robed men from Bokhara; there are innumerable Tartars, some accompanied by their women folk: fat, swaddled, wearing collarbox hats of velvet decorated with pearls and only partially obeying the Prophet in the matter of hiding the face.

The fair ground is a mud flat, lying across the Volga from Nijnl-Novgorod proper. There are rows upon rows of cheap brick sheds, one storey high, yellow ochred, with a pavement of sorts. The roadway, once cobbled, is a mass of disgusting

THE END OF THE JOURNEY.

mire. Peasant carters, in charge of inconsequent teams, hauling miscellaneous merchandise, yell and bawl. A jolting droshki, attempting to dash by, splashes the uniform of a Russian officer with filth, and as the Russian language is well stored with expletives, there is violent cursing. Russian soldiers, unwashed and in unkempt clothing, trudge sullenly in the gutter, carrying big loaves of black bread beneath their oxters. A cadaverous, long-haired, black-gowned priest goes hurrying by. Old women cross themselves, and young men spit on the ground. A bunch of porcine Chinese, in blue jackets and swinging pigtails, come over the bridge from China-town, where all the buildings have eaves that leer, and on the doors are painted rampant dragons of fearful design, intended to frighten away thieves—and probably do.

Tinkle-tinkle, and an awkward, heave-and-bump electric tramcar comes sizzling along. Some Moslems are facing the East, fancying they look toward Mecca, which they don't, and are performing their devotions in the street. Moscow merchants are in an adjoining café, and a gramophone blares, "I wouldn't leave my little wooden hut for you." There is the constant click of the abacus, beads on wires, on which we learn to count as children, and without which the Russian, inheriting its use from Tartar ancestors, cannot reckon how many two and three total. A playbill on the side of a rickety kiosk announces a performance, in Russian of course, of *The Geisha*. Nowhere have I seen such a jostling of East and West.

One likes to think Nijnì-Novgorod fairs are Oriental. It is customary to associate the Orient with the dazzling. But there is nothing dazzling about the fairs. The Eastern practice is followed of all the shops selling particular wares being in one district. I looked for old silver, and found cartloads of crude Austrian electro-plate. I sought antique rugs, and got a headache looking at the vile, highly-coloured and grotesque-patterned mats manufactured in German Poland. The only embroideries were imitation rubbish from Switzerland. In a dirty café I did come across some melancholy Persians who had turquoise and opal stones to sell, and we spent a rainy afternoon in haggling.

Yet there is a fascination in the multitude of articles. At times one can imagine that all the manufacturers of shoddy articles had dumped their things on the Volga side. Try to picture a third of a mile of tombstones for sale—though, Hibernian-like, most of the stones are of wood. Here the merchant from the far interior may acquire a really striking monument which will make him the envy of his neighbours who have never been to the fair. A whole street is devoted to the sale of *ikons*, pictures of saints set out in Byzantine style in flaming gilt, which are to be found in every Russian house in the right-hand corner at the upper end of the room. There are streets sacred to the sale of Russian boots—there must be millions of them. Battalions of sacks laden with raisins block one thoroughfare; another road is a maze of bales of wool. A row of shops is given up to the sale of

umbrellas, and there is a merriment watching the astonished countenance of a simple peasant woman having an umbrella opened in her face for the first time. Miles upon miles of cotton goods, with no nonsensical half-shades about them, but strong and unmistakable reds and greens and blues and yellows. Half a street is given up to cheap German toys.

In the centre of the fair is a large red-brick arcade, with shops selling the usual tinsel and expensive things, with the usual band playing in the afternoon, and the usual rows of wooden-faced individuals sitting on benches stolidly enjoying the music. There is the usual pestering by importunate dealers. And there are literally billions of postcards.

I do not presume to give advice to anybody, least of all to a Government. But I do think that if the gendarmes would relax a little their chivvying of boys selling newspapers in which the grossly seditious statement is put forward that the administration of affairs is not in the best hands, and directed their energies to putting a stop to the flagrant sale of indecent photographs, they might be doing some good. I am too seasoned a man of the world to be affected by such things, but when I have seen thousands of the vilest photographs openly on sale and being turned over by boys of fifteen and sixteen, and when a dozen times in a single day I have in cafés been approached by youngsters of nine and ten years of age, and they have grinningly produced abominable pictures from their pockets, I am quite certain there is some official in Nijnl-Novgorod who ought to be tied to a post and publicly flogged.

One evening I climbed the hill of the quaint-walled fortress which guards Nijni-Novgorod. The failing sun was burnishing the domes of innumerable churches. A hundred sweet-toned bells, beaten with wooden hammers, made the evening melodious. There was the heavy tramp of full-kitted Russian soldiers mounting the hill to the fortress; there was the distant babel of a city doing business at the top of its voice. Down below on the Volga was the scurrying of tug boats hauling mammoth cattle boats and snake-like rafts into place, and the constant shrill warning hoots of the syrens. Away eastward, Siberiawards, stretched a flat and unbroken land to the very horizon, with a lowering purple sky, deadening to black. The whole scene was very impressive: indeed, the only impressive memory I took from the mart of Nijni-Novgorod.

CHAPTER X.

MEN OF MARK.

Russia's Lack of a Great Man—How Ministers are chosen—Count Witte—M. Stolypin—Alexis Souverin—Alexander Guchkoff—M. Shipoff—Count Heyden—Professor Milukoff—Princes Peter and Paul Dolgorukoff—Vladimir Nabokoff—A Leader of the Labour Party.

LET me begin with a paradox: There are no leading men in Russia. There is no great man with outstanding personality capable of taking Russia by the hand or seizing it by the scruff of the neck and sending it along the right road.

There are various reasons why one great man has not risen at the present juncture as he would have been forthcoming in any other country. The Muscovite Empire is composed of different countries, of people different in race, in speech, in religion. The least intelligent are those in the majority, the Russians themselves. The men who are rousing Russia to revolution are, as we have seen, not pure Russians. The Russian is a slow-witted, lazy fellow, half good-natured and half cruel, sentimental and impressionable, who will attempt to kill his enemy this morning and tearfully slobber over him this afternoon, superstitiously religious, a fatalist,

and with a trait of the Asiatic in him which warps his sense of right according to the Western code, and makes him corrupt as a mere matter of course. Deep in his heart is reverence for authority. In his veins is a cringing before power.

The Russian Government is treating all the subjects of the Emperor as though they were Russians. Stern repression is a thing which the Russian understands and yields to. Were the uprising limited to Russians the Government could crush it in a month. But there are others, who are not to be brought to heel with a crack of the knout.

In Western lands it is usual for Ministers to rise slowly to eminence under the eye of the public. Not so in Russia. Ministers are the selection of the Emperor, and until the appointment their names are almost as unknown to Russians as they are to the rest of the world. The Emperor is impressed by some soldier who comes within his vision. He makes him a Governor-General. A hundred million Russians never heard of him. For a year or two he is in the public gaze. He falls from favour; the Emperor dismisses him; in a few months his name is forgotten.

The autocracy of Russia means that the Emperor can make any man anything. It is the uniform which is of value; the individual inside it counts for little. Said the Emperor Paul on one historic occasion: "In Russia there is only one person that has any importance besides myself. It is the man I happen to be talking to, and only while I am talking to him."

Yet there is a vigorous strain of democracy in Russia. Men of humble origin do rise to the highest positions, which shows that though a Minister may be the result of an Imperial fancy, a Minister may also be a man of some individuality.

Suspect by the Court circle because of his supposed liberal leanings, hated by many because of his friendship with the Jews, Count Witte is the one man, apart from the sovereign, who is an actual force in Russia to-day. He has fallen from his pedestal. But he is not broken.

Apart from Tolstoy—whose force as a personality in Russia is waning—Witte is the only man in Russia about whom there is a glamour. In one way he is like Lord Rosebery; in office or out of office, speaking or playing the sphinx, he attracts attention. He is the leader of no party. He is just Witte, and when he ceased to be the Minister of the Emperor nobody knew whether it was because his views were too reactionary or too much inclined to reform. But as both reformers and reactionaries dislike him, because of his supposed disposition toward the other side, he is the man who might find a middle way for Russia to escape from her immediate political difficulties.

I met Count Witte at a luncheon party at Yalta, in the Crimea. No politics were discussed. The talk was of the usual nondescript character, ranging from the state of Russian roads in rainy weather to the sport obtainable in India. What struck me about Witte was his physical strength—heavy and almost brutal, broad-shouldered, a big, heavy,

domineering head, and a countenance which suggested a man good-naturedly contemptuous of the opinions of others—and his brusqueness of the it-is-so character, such as you sometimes find among North of England manufacturers who have welded their own success and let you know it.

Witte, like so many men of that sort, has the faculty of securing continued loyalty in friendship. He has his adherents in the press, and therefore he is one of the few men who do not pass into oblivion when the Emperor has thrown them on one side. Everybody in Russia is a little afraid of Witte. Enforced idleness has fallen upon him—the glutton for work, the man who was always at work before other men were out of bed, who worked into the nights which other men gave to their amusements, who always maintained the pace, never slackened, and half killed his secretaries. He had no consideration for himself, none for others. What he could do in continuous labour he reckoned others could do. He was impatient of indecision.

Power and place have been the lodestars of Witte's career. His love of these is boundless. He must be first man. Humble born, inclined to bully, his dominance has been resented by those of aristocratic birth. The fact that he married a lady of Jewish extraction has been used against him in the charge that he is friendly toward the enemies of his country.

When I was in Petersburg I was constantly hearing the story that Witte was thinking of seeking a constituency with the purpose of becoming a

member of the new Duma. But he did not. Had he done so he would have been the one man of dominance. He would be the one man with an intimate acquaintance of the working of State machinery, and would have become the chief of the Moderate party, the Constitutional Democrats, or Cadets, who, having no sympathy with the Social-Democrats, recognise that bureaucratic administration, under the autocracy of the Emperor, must cease.

The present Minister of the Interior, M. Stolypin, is not a brilliant, but he is a well-meaning and conscientious statesman. He is what we would call a level-headed, serviceable man. There is no genius about him; his conversation is not distinguished. But he knows what his duty is, and he is intent on doing it. The recent attempt to assassinate him, when about thirty persons were killed, his own children maimed for life, his house wrecked, never shook him in his determination. Though he is the Minister of the Emperor, and therefore popularly regarded as the enemy of democracy, I have good reason for knowing he is keenly desirous for improvement in the condition of the people. His days and his nights have been spent considering measures to alleviate the lot of the *moudjiks*. He knows well that whatever is put forward on behalf of the Government is laughed at. The Government have made many promises and broken them all. He is manacled by public disbelief in everything he says—not because he is M. Stolypin, but because he is Minister of the Interior. In private

talk he acknowledges that his first task is to prove that this time the Government mean what they say. Yet, whilst he is taking up this attitude, he is using the power of a despot in crushing outbursts of revolution.

M. Stolypin, though his name is new to the world, has had years of training in government. He was Governor of Saratov, the most progressive province on the Volga, Russia's great water highway, where there are many descendants of the German colonists who settled in Russia over a century ago. The peasants of Saratov were among the first to adopt violent appropriation of their landlord neighbours' property, and there was street fighting in Saratov as early as there was in St. Petersburg. As Governor, Stolypin made a practice of spending a large part of his time travelling about the towns and villages in his jurisdiction, inquiring into grievances, correcting abuses, and checking disorder with firmness and justice. He learned to know what the peasants really wanted. When he left the province it was comparatively orderly. It has remained so. Perhaps the most valuable lesson he carried with him into the Ministry of the Interior and the Prime Minister's Cabinet was a knowledge, which seems to have become intuitive, of the lengths to which repression may go without reaching the snapping point.

Stolypin has the quality of repose and a "stickativeness" not commonly found in Russia. Russian statesmen usually talk big about reforms, and often make plans, but tire before getting to the

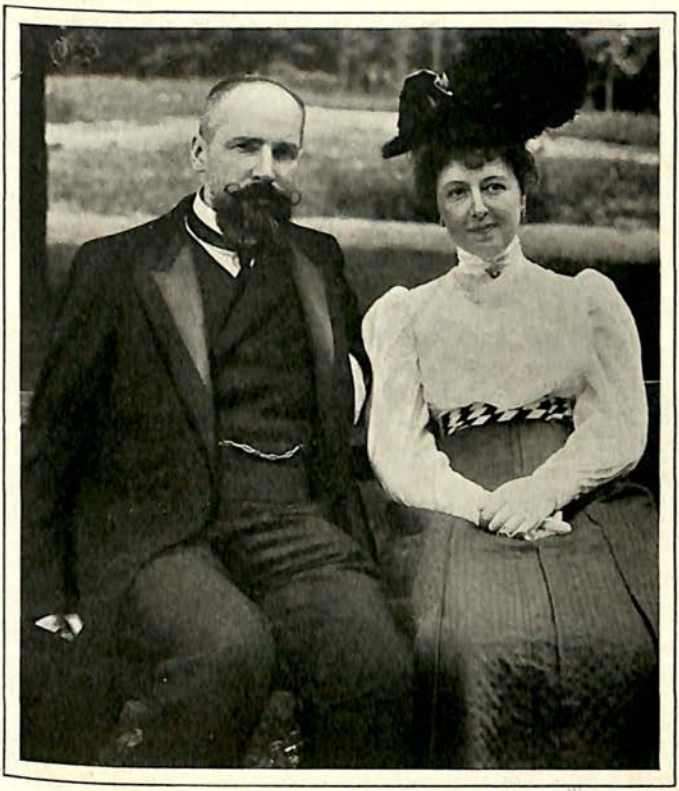
point of executing them. Stolypin, though not a constructive politician, made up his mind what he thought was needed, and quietly set about doing it. He faced the angry deputies in the Duma, and walked up and down its lobbies with his hands in his pockets after some superheated Socialists had shouted threats of personal violence at him.

Here is a man not easily frightened nor carried off his feet. He is a wealthy nobleman, and has aristocratic instincts, and, without originally possessing any known reform leanings, he came to the conclusion that reforms had to be introduced, and he has been putting into effect the promises of his predecessors regardless of suspicion in Court circles, abuse and threats on the part of violent reactionaries, criticism from the Constitutionalists, and plots against his life by the revolutionaries.

Though the existing system of government in Russia is altogether out of touch with Western ideas, I look upon M. Stolypin as a good man to hold the office of Prime Minister. The very fact that there is no blaze of personality about him is an advantage in these rough times. His political ethics are of the simplest and most straightforward nature: let order be maintained and a steady progress made toward improvement. In these days when the charge of corruption is rightly flung at so many men wielding authority in Russia, there has been no whisper against Stolypin. He is personally easy-going, does not expect too much from mankind, and does not wring his hands in despair when things go crooked—as they generally do in

Russia. He is an amiable man, disposed, if disorder can be brought to an end, to follow the line of least resistance. Yet it is this very quality which, in the eyes of many of his countrymen, is a doubtful advantage. Politically he is not stable, and whilst men about the Court know he is disposed to make concessions to the reform party for the sake of peace, the extreme revolutionaries can point to more than one instance where they have won a point from Stolypin after they have been playing their principal card of terrorism. M. Stolypin has an energetic manner. He is straight and strong, and might be taken for a soldier in civilian attire.

Alexis Souverin, peasant by origin, proprietor of the *Novoe Vremya (Daily News)*, the leading paper in Russia, and for about thirty years the foremost figure in the journalistic world of Russia, must be accounted one of the most remarkable men of his country. He and his paper came into prominence after the extinction of the *Goloss (Voice)*, the organ of the reform era which went down in the storm that blew the Emperor Alexander II. out of existence. Souverin never forgot that lesson. He determined to build up a newspaper property that would survive all shocks, and there was only one way to do it. He made friends with the powers that be, and set himself the task of discovering who they were—not a simple matter in a country where Ministers were wont to cut each other's political throats from time to time. More than that, he had to discover who they were before they knew it themselves. He had to keep his ear to the ground



M. AND MME. STOLYPIN.

and his nose to the wind. And he succeeded. The *Novoe Vremya* became, and has never ceased to be, a newspaper. It has always gone after, and usually secured, the news of the world, trimmed its sails to the prevailing currents, made itself the principal, almost the sole, advertising medium for this part of the country, and built up a great book-publishing and bookselling business.

One has so often been deceived in Russia that many men were long inclined to doubt the reality of Alexander Guchkoff's claims to stand apart from the common herd. But it is a great step in Russia to want to be taken for a man instead of being tagged with a number. Anybody who attends a meeting in Russia is always struck with the repetition of the same phenomenon. Everybody tries to say the same thing. The speakers seem possessed not so much by their own thoughts as by the desire to find a formula to express the consensus of opinion of the whole assemblage. This striving to sink the individual in the mass was noted in all the party congresses that preceded and followed the calling of the Duma. It was the most obvious feature of the sittings of the Duma itself. Journalists whose duty called them to this Parliament found it almost intolerable to hear the same thing said by everybody from day to day.

It was in one of the congresses at Moscow that Alexander Guchkoff first came into notice. He refused to be herded. There were resolutions to be passed about the autonomy of Poland, the civic emancipation of the Jews, the pardon that was

demanded for political prisoners and exiles, and other matters. Guchkoff, to the amazement of everybody, opposed the autonomy of Poland, was in no hurry about philo-Semitic legislation, and declared that if the revolutionary assassins and other martyrs were to be pardoned and set free, the same grace must be extended to the "Black Hundreds," the instigators and instruments of *pogroms*. There was amazement in the congress, and the reformers went after Guchkoff like a pack in full cry. He stood them at bay, and refused to yield an inch of ground. That debate is still recalled with glowing eyes by all that witnessed it or participated in it. Guchkoff became an object of fear and suspicion. He was summoned to St. Petersburg to confer with Count Witte about going into the Cabinet. The issue was watched with bated breath. "This young man with the curate coat and the ascetic, stern face, is the most dangerous person in Russia," observed one of my friends. "Put him in office, and he would become a man of blood and iron, and the reform movement would be snuffed out if force could do it."

Who is Guchkoff? He is the son of a wealthy Moscow merchant, and is the manager of a large bank. He was brought up in the strict traditions of an orthodox Moscow merchant's family. A few years ago he engaged in an expedition for the exploration of Mongolia, and served as a field agent of the Red Cross during the Boxer and the Manchurian wars. He displayed energy and probity in this work, and upon his return easily found a seat on the

PROFESSOR MILUKOFF (ON THE LEFT) AND ALEXIS ALADIN.

Moscow Municipal Council along with his younger brother, Nicholas, now the mayor of the old capital. It was as the delegate of Moscow to the congress of Zemstvos (county councils and municipalities) that he became memorable. He declined to go into the Constitutional Democratic Party, and, with Dmitry N. Shipoff—for thirty years the leader of the Moscow Zemstvo, and therefore of the entire Zemstvo movement—he helped to found the Seventeenth of October Society. Its programme was the realisation of the reforms promised by the manifesto procured from the Emperor by Count Witte, instead of asking for more at once. The Octobrists made a poor show in the first Duma elections. M. Shipoff has withdrawn from the party, as has Count Heyden, so that Guchkoff remains its sole leader of distinction. He still stands for supporting the Government during the crisis, and is confident the reforms will be executed.

M. Shipoff was the man who made a fight in the first Zemstvo Congress—which preceded the terrible "Red Sunday" by only two months—for a consultative Parliament instead of one with full legislative and budgetary powers. Probably he is now convinced Russia would not be satisfied with the retention of the autocracy, but he has not definitely joined any political party. He refused to stay with the Octobrists because he could not go with Guchkoff in the support and defence of drumhead courts-martial. Shipoff has an enviable name in Russia. Few people agree with his political opinions, but everybody acknowledges his probity

and integrity. He has proved this by thirty years of manful struggle for the rights of the Zemstvos to control their own local affairs and to do something for the spread of education and general enlightenment and civilisation among the peasants.

Count P. A. Heyden was one of the joys of the first Duma. He has spent his long life in the public service, having been for many years the vice-president and staunch defender of the Imperial Free Economic Society. Though an advocate of democratic reforms, of Parliamentary government, and the satisfaction of the land-hunger of the peasants, he was by temperament opposed to the policy of going full tilt at the Government. *Suaviter in modo* was all over his kindly face, and seasoned his gentle voice. Count Heyden has formed a moderate constitutional party under the name of the Party of Peaceful Regeneration. It elected few candidates to the second Dūma, but they will try to mark out the middle line to which the other parties may rally in case extreme influences do not get the upper hand.

The undisputed leader of the Cadets (Constitutional Democrats: in England they would be called Conservatives) is Professor Paul N. Milukoff. Doubtless the unusual advantages enjoyed by the study of practical politics abroad have contributed largely to his success. A decade ago he was winning fame as the author of a series of charming and illuminating studies in Russian history, but the inquiry into the origins of the Russian governmental system pointed too clearly to the future already

looming on the horizon. The group of *littérateurs* whom he attracted became inevitably involved in politics, and Professor Milukoff was required to abandon his chair in the University. He was invited to Sofia, where he had an opportunity of observing another Slav race that had passed the Russians on the road of progress, and had achieved both national independence and a wide measure of political liberty—the one with the help, the other against the will, of the Russian Government. He returned to St. Petersburg about eight years ago, and continued both his literary and his political activity, with the result, as far as the latter was concerned, that he occasionally found himself behind prison bars. He seemed to take these experiences as a matter of course, just as the ancient Stoics used to advise their disciples before going to the public baths to consider the rowdyism they were sure to find in those loafing places.

Professor Milukoff speaks excellent English, and is quite English in appearance. No one could be farther removed from the swarthy, melodramatic and somewhat sinister personage usually associated in English minds with the Russian "revolutionary," for he is cheerful and kindly, with keen blue eyes looking straight at one, russet moustache and beard, and white hair brushed back from a high, intellectual-looking forehead.

The policy of the Constitutional Democrats is one of reform, but by constitutional means. Particularly would they sweep away all exceptional laws such as those relating to the Jews, the results of

which, at their promulgation, were anticipated by a Russian official to cause one-third of these unhappy people to emigrate, one-third to be converted to the Orthodox Church, and the remaining third to die of starvation! Milukoff was mainly instrumental in persuading the masses of the constitutional reformers to take part in the elections to the first Duma. Many feared the Duma would merely strengthen the hands of the bureaucracy, and many wished to discredit it by abstaining from the ballot. The results of the elections brilliantly justified Professor Milukoff's arguments that the best way to prevent the evils feared was to jump in and win all the seats possible. As everybody knows, the Cadets found themselves in control of the Duma. Professor Milukoff was tricked out of a seat himself, as he was under charges of having committed a press offence, and the trial was prolonged until the elections were over. He nevertheless continued to direct the tactics of the party as far as anyone could. It was drawn further to the left than was wished, owing to the uncompromising attitude of the Court. Professor Milukoff, far more moderate than the majority of the party, stemmed the tide to leftward as long as he regarded it safe to do so, but went with the crowd to keep the organisation intact.

No name is more prominent in the movement to grow national liberty in the nursery afforded by the Zemstvos, the county councils of Russia, than that of the brothers Princes Peter and Paul Dolgorukoff. Scions of an ancient noble family, bluff, strong men of the best Russian type, they

have placed their fortunes at the service of public education and at the disposal of the reformers for two decades, and their palace in Moscow has often served as a meeting place when every other door was closed by the police. The unselfishness of Paul was displayed in his giving place as a candidate for the Duma to a *savant* of Jewish extraction—Professor Hertzenstein, the expert on finance and agrarian questions, who was assassinated by a police hireling shortly after the Duma was dissolved. Prince Peter, when not serving as Vice-President of the Duma, a position that he filled with dignity and tact, sat modestly in the body of the House, flanked on both sides by peasants from his province, Kursk. The reactionaries have a way of insinuating that the reformers want to replace the Romanoffs with a Dolgorukoff dynasty. The idea is, of course, beyond the range of practical politics. But there are millions of Russians who agree that should the necessity of creating a new dynasty arise the Dolgorukoffs would be the first to be considered.

Nobody made a better record in the Duma than the floor leader of the Cadets, Vladimir Nabokoff, the son of a former Minister of Justice. M. Nabokoff was a Court Chamberlain until his contributions to the Constitutionalist weekly, *Pravo* (*Law*), emptied upon his head the vials of Court wrath. He is of the clean-limbed type more often found in England than in Russia, ruddy of complexion, careful in his attire, ready of speech and thought. He is often spoken of as a "gentleman in politics," and though he is not better born

than hundreds of others in the movement, the threadbare phrase seems to have a peculiar fitness in his case. He had a happy knack of explaining the most complicated Parliamentary questions and situations in a few sentences, and never made a speech longer than ten minutes. He is marked for future eminence, and is content to wait for it, preferring to make himself useful by performing any party drudgery than to push himself forward for honours and preferment.

Of the leaders of the Labour Party, those resolute peasants who have by hard work, pluck, and endurance shaken off the trammels of the uncultured village and become educated citizens of the world, the first place unquestionably belongs to Alexis Aladin. The son of poor villagers in Simbirsk, the most backward province in European Russia, he managed to find means for a grammar school and university education. After about two years of attendance at the University of Kazan, he was imprisoned as the leader of a Social Democratic group of students. At the end of seven months' confinement he was rusticated to Simbirsk, but escaped to Belgium, and spent ten years abroad, mainly in England. He acquired the grit of an English trades union leader. If there was any of the Russian invertebrateness in his make-up, he got tempered in England. His face took on a resolute cast not often met with among Russians. He was never known to laugh, and rarely to relax even in a smile during the entire Duma session. He employed a crude directness of speech that grated upon polished

ears, but went straight to the understandings of the peasants in the Duma and in the country. For him the Duma was a good place for propaganda. He never believed in its mission as a positive legislative force. The Senate, the Russian Supreme Court, composed mainly of ex-chiefs of administrative departments, whose whole life has been spent in undermining the laws, has handed down an interpretation of the election laws which is designed to render the election of an educated peasant like Aladin impossible in future. But it would be unsafe to predict that the career of this young man has thereby been closed.

CHAPTER XI.

A POLITICAL TRIAL.

Kazan, the Ancient Tartar Capital—A Medley of Superstition and Orientalism—A Court of Justice—Two of the Prisoners—The Hall—The Seven Judges—Charge against the Editor and Publisher of the *Evening*—The Censor in the Box—A Clever Advocate—Acquittal—Reflections.

THERE is a mighty jostling of wild-faced, skin-clad *moudjiks* and puke-mouthed, almond-eyed and shamble-gaited Tartars.

For this is Kazan, the ancient Tartar capital, where the slim minarets of the Mahommedans stand side by side with the gilt domes of the Christian churches. The conquered Tartars, crouching on their heels, do their bartering in soft and stealthy tones, and the conquering Russians, big and whiskered and grimy and swaddled in sheep-skins, haggle in raucous tones, blackguard one another over kopeks, and swears as only Russian *moudjiks* can.

The roadway is a wallow of filth. Country carts are in confusion, and the air is filled with the oaths of the drivers. Only the Tartars are philosophers, for in soft and yet metallic-voiced falsetto they sing songs which their fathers brought from Tartary. Some are praying. I come across three, robed,

henna-bearded, and their fingers long and delicate and not given to labour. Heedless of the mob, they stand with hands clasped before them, chanting that Allah is Great, that he is the only true God, and that Mahomet is his prophet. They kneel and pray; they touch their foreheads on the ground and pray again.

Over there is the Church of the Lady of Kazan. Pious Russians—and all Russians are pious in ceremony—cross themselves as they go by. The old beggar man removes his fur cap and crosses himself. Peasant women kneel and cross themselves. Foul *moudjiks*, roaring at one another what their female relatives are, take off their hats and cross themselves three times. But they never cease their swearing. Inside the gaudy church is the holy picture. When the Russians with blood wrested Kazan from the Tartars, the Mongols retaliated by burning the city. Only one spot was untouched by flame. The vision of a girl caused the Russians to dig. They found a painting of the Mother of God. The *moudjiks* believe the picture was painted by God. Who other could? When they are ill and look upon it, they begin to feel better.

It is all a jumble of superstition and Orientalism. But here comes the West in a clanging electric tramcar, and I go off to a newspaper office.

Alas, the editor is not in. Indeed, he has not been in for several months. There is no saying whether he will ever be in again. He is in prison, but is being tried to-day, and to-morrow he may be on his way to Siberia.

A political trial! So I hasten to the Court. It is a gaunt, white-plastered place. The vestibule is crowded. All the windows are closed; the air is disgusting; everybody is jabbering at the top of his voice, and spitting and smoking cigarettes. There are dirty soldiers lounging against the walls, and handling carelessly their loaded guns with fixed bayonets.

No; Mr. Stadernoff has not yet been tried. His is the next case. The judges have retired to consider the cases of Madame Karatnova and Michael Androkoff, who have been caught with a secret lithographic press, the stamp of the revolutionary party, and a pile of revolutionary literature. So!

Four soldiers, slouching and in dirty uniforms, are guarding the prisoners, who have already been in custody four months.

The woman is fifty, maybe, and she is standing with her hands behind her back. She is dressed in the plainest of black gowns. Her grey hair is pushed straight back from the forehead and tied in a big knot on the neck. The face is pale, but intellectual. It is a very kind face; the dark eyes are all tenderness, though the look is far off. The nostrils are tender and dilate with the heave of her bosom. The mouth is as straight and as thin as a piece of taut string. Outwardly, she is quite resigned. Peace is on her countenance. She gives no sign as she stands with hands clasped behind her—save the heave of the bosom and the dilation of the nostrils. She speaks to no one. The soldiers

are smoking cigarettes, and mosaicking the floor with their saliva.

All about is the shrill jangle of tongues. The waiting crowd are mostly young people, students, young men and young women, revolutionaries, champions of freedom.

The male prisoner is sitting, elbows on knees, and he is chewing the cardboard of an extinguished cigarette. A heavy lurching fellow, porridge-faced, with a drooping, ugly jowl; the eyes small, bright-black, and twinkling; his hair is straight on end—a head like a porcupine. He is quite young, and when he raises his head it is to snigger. Instinctively I dislike the fellow.

At the back of the crowd walks an advocate, rather French in appearance, with his imperial and his evening clothes in the morning. He is sucking hard at the Russian *paperos*, and tossing them into corners, lighting others, and all the time sipping *chai*, amber-hued tea, delicious with a slice of lemon, the beverage of all Muscovy, and alongside which the milk-splashed beverage of England is insipid stuff. He is listening to a well dressed man of sixty, much worn and his eyes red with long anxiety. He is the husband of the woman prisoner.

But everybody else is good humoured. There is chatter and laughter. The judges are long coming to a decision.

A shrill tinkle of an electric bell. We stampede into the Court, for the judges are about to return. The sharp eyes of the usher sees a foreigner in the crowd. Would I not have a seat within the rail?

It is rather a fine hall, railed off in two sections, one for the Court, and the other for the public. There is a half moon green-cloth table, with seven chairs, the centre one bigger than the others and ornamented with the Imperial crown. Behind is a life-size portrait of the Emperor; on the right is a life-size portrait of his father Alexander III., not loved of the people; at the lower end of the room is a life-size portrait of Alexander II., beloved by the people, for it was he who freed Russia from serfdom.

Before the table is a stand like a lectern, draped in green silk, and on it rests the Scriptures in plush covers, and by its side is a cross of gold. The advocates, in evening dress, sit in a pew. Close by are the two prisoners: the woman calm and resigned, and the man smirking at the public.

There is a signal, and everybody rises. For here come the judges. I am anxious to see the monsters who condemn innocent people, throw them into prison, and exile folks to Siberia. Will they be like the folks pictured in the mind, sullen, brutal, brow-beating?

There are seven judges. Four represent the Crown, and are dressed rather like British naval officers. There is a representative of the richer classes, called the aristocracy, and he sits on the right of the President. Next him is a representative of the Kazan municipality; he wears a silver chain. The seventh is a representative of the peasantry, a long-haired, blue-gowned priest, with a large silver cross upon his breast.

They are not fearful-looking men. They are courteous gentlemen, who listen quietly to what is said, put pertinent questions, and when a prisoner asks leave to say something, it is always *Pashalst* ("If you please") from the President. I have seen many a bench of county magistrates in England who might learn something from this Kazan Court.

The prisoners stand. Both Karatnova and Androkoff have been in prison four months and a half. That is taken into consideration. The man will go to prison for two and a half months more —he grins superciliously; the woman—who had taken care of the printing press for somebody else—will be freed. The prisoners bow, and go away. So!

"Yes," said a wiry man, "a very fair Court. That plea of the printing press belonging to somebody else—rubbish! But the judges want to be lenient."

"Anyway, they've escaped Siberia," I mutter.

"Oh, have they? There is no trial needed to send them to Siberia. The woman is pretty certain to be sent there. She has been freed by this Court, but the *gendarmerie*, who keep an eye on the politicals, have a right, without any reason given, to deport her. They'll just take her in the night, and away she goes. Nobody knows where. As she's an old woman, and not done anything particularly bad, she'll probably have to go to a place like Perm for five years. Once you are suspected by the political police you are got rid of without trial. They have been tried for breaking the law.

But you needn't break the law to be sent to Siberia. If, because of your political views, you are thought dangerous, that is enough. Ah, here's the editor!"

There are two prisoners, Mr. Stadernoff, the editor, and Mr. Senelee, the publisher of the *Evening*, both youngish men; the editor spectacled and clean-shaven, somewhat like a German student given to philosophy, whilst his companion is a nondescript, tousle-headed, devil-may-care being who regards everything as a joke and is not reprimanded.

The public lean forward to hear the charge gabbled by a clerk in the manner I have heard a House of Lords clerk chase through a patent of nobility—as though he desires to smash records. The revolutionary young women are all attention, and the revolutionary young men, in red shirts and long hair, seem to envy the prisoners.

The charge is that two days after the smothering of the Duma by Imperial ukase, there was printed in the *Evening* an article in which the news of the closing of the Duma was described as like a bomb among the people; that the people must now be ready to stand in their places and use their power, and that this time there must be no bloodshed for nothing—an incitement to violence, surely—and that the paper continued to be published and sold after prohibition by the Censor—that kindly gentleman whose official functions are to decide what is mentally good or bad for the Russian people.

Half a dozen witnesses: one a Tartar, the machineman at the newspaper office, and a newsboy who cried the journal in the streets. The

shrivelled, unwashed Tartar steps aside, whilst the others stand in a row, raise their hands, and take the oath before a fat priest. Each kisses the Scriptures and the Cross. Priest steps back, and Moslem *mullah* steps forward: a wizened man with white turban, tawny leather-like cheeks, dyed beard, tinted finger nails, and gown of much embroidered green. He has the Koran tucked away somewhere in the folds of his gown—precisely where he does not know. He searches for it after the manner of Mrs. Crusoe in the pantomime who cannot find the letter from her scamp son Robinson. However, it is found, and the Tartar takes the Moslem oath.

The Court is ready, the witnesses sworn, the advocates have refixed their ties, the prisoners fold their hands, and the worthy old usher—own brother to the ushers in the Strand Law Court—whispers to two lady revolutionists that if they do not behave they must leave, assures a stout merchant there is no room, and, when something has been slipped into his hands, finds there is just room for one more. So!

First witness: a plain clothes policeman. But whether it is his trousers or his boots which play informant, a child could tell he was a plain clothes policeman—just as in England. He received a message by telephone to go to the *Evening* and forbid further publication. Did so—on the customary "information received" plan.

Cross-examined: Did he say he was instructed by the Governor or the Prefect of Police to stop the paper? Didn't know he said one or the other.

Indeed (rather nervously), now he came to think of it, he didn't know who telephoned to him to stop the paper.

"And you had the audacity," snaps the advocate, who would do well at the Old Bailey, "to go to a newspaper office to stop publication on an unknown telephone message? Humph!" and the advocate sits down suddenly.

"Humph!" echoes the careful President, who makes a note.

"He, he!" giggle the revolutionary ladies.

"Order, order," commands the usher.

"May I speak?" inquires the editor.

"*Pashalst*," invites the President.

"The reason we didn't stop printing was because the police are always coming. We give them a rouble or two, and they go away. We always send a copy to the Censor, but if we waited till we got the permission of the Censor the paper would never come out at all."

"Humph! humph!" mutters the President.

Now the Censor, a florid man, with scant red whiskers and well-worn blue uniform, and trousers decidedly baggy. He stands in the middle of the Court, self-conscious and knowing what to do neither with his hands nor with his feet. He telephoned to the police to stop the paper, for he saw it was being sold in the streets before he had read it.

The advocate leans on the edge of the pew, plays with the tails of his thin moustaches, and is sarcastic. "Too tired, eh, to go himself to the newspaper office; so he telephones to the policeman, eh?"

It is clear the Censor has no friends. Even the usher laughs at him, and forgets to reprove the public for laughing. The Censor gets pink and more awkward, and see-saws from leg to leg for support. The publisher chuckles, and nods to his friends. The editor cleans his pince-nez, and his hand trembles.

The judges ask questions of the Censor. They do not seem kindly toward him.

Still there is the article declaring that as the Duma was closed, the people must be ready to stand in their places and use their power, and that this time there must be no bloodshed for nothing!

The law of Russia had put one interpretation on the words. Will their obvious meaning be admitted, the editor glory in his preaching and go off to Siberia to the tune of sobs by young lady revolutionaries wearing red ribbons in their hats?

Nothing like it. The advocate, an eloquent man and a good lawyer, sets up the plea that in these stirring times the authorities have the jumps, that the Censor is a fool, and really does not understand the plain Russian language. True, the article is vigorous, but then let the seven grave and reverend gentlemen remember the excitement which followed the closing of the Duma. (The seven judges nod in automatic unison.) And the people must stand in their places! Why not? He was standing in his place. The judges were sitting in theirs; the hucksters outside were standing in their places. What crime was there to tell the people to stand in their places? Did the article say they were to

stand there with revolvers? No! Did it say they were to stand there with bombs? No! And they were to use their power. Quite so! By what right did the Censor decide it meant power was to be used for harm? Was there not the power of the brain? Was there not the power of love? The lawyer warmed to his work—a brilliant lawyer. "This time there must be no bloodshed for nothing!" Who with ordinary intelligence would say that advocated bloodshed? Was it not a protest against the needless waste of blood in these revolutionary times? Of course it was.

Oh, clever lawyer! The judges are impressed. So are the revolutionaries behind the rails. The Russians are an emotional people. "A very good speech," I thought, "and he has earned his fee. But if we sent editors to prison in England for writing that sort of thing, no judge would allow himself to be so bamboozled as to what is the meaning of the writer."

The judges retire. The rest of us surge into the warm evil-smelling hall, and drink tea and smoke cigarettes and talk politics. An electric bell rings, and there is scurrying back. The prisoners are acquitted!

"Dear me, and didn't the editor mean what the Censor thought he meant?"

I think I see a fluttering of the lawyer's eyelid.

"You will have noticed how fair the Court was," he says with a smile.

"Quite fair. But your man wouldn't have got off in England—assuming we had a Siberia!"

There is jubilation.

"Ah," grunts a man, "he's free! But he is under suspicion. That is almost worse than being found guilty. The political gendarmes may have something to say. He'll have to go gently, or else —oh, well, it is an honour to go to Siberia in these days."

The Censor, scowling, hurries through the throng. He hails a droshki.

Kazan is going about its business. The Tartars slink along as though they were cold. The *moudjiks* are still swearing. The heavy bell of the Church of the Lady of Kazan is beating sonorously. The *mullah* is in the little gallery of the minaret, chanting that the faithful should come and pray. Here is a tramcar, and I jump on, for I am going to buy picture postcards to send to England. It is early afternoon, and the news-lads are already selling the *Evening*.

Quite a lot of Western ways seem to have travelled eastwards, even across the Volga river.

CHAPTER XII.

SCENES AT A SECRET MEETING.

A Sunday Evening in Samara—On the Way to the Meeting—Challenged—What the Revolutionaries think of the Police—The Meeting—For and against Violence—Desultory Talk—The Englishman interrogated—A False Alarm.

It was not at all the kind of evening to debate dark deeds.

Were I describing the scene in a novel I am sure the night would be black as pitch, that there would be swishing rain, that the vivid lightning would flash bright on the bayonets of Cossacks, that we should sidle along from dark corner to dark corner, be challenged, that our hearts would beat like kettledrums, that a gun would be fired, that a fair but persecuted damsel would whisper from the unknown, that we should crawl through a window, and with stealthy step reach the rendezvous—it is always a rendezvous in novels—where there was to be a secret meeting of the Russian revolutionaries.

That is if I were writing a novel.

But prosaic fact is different. It is a pleasant Sunday evening, and all the young men and young women of Samara, on the side of the muddy Volga river in far eastern Russia, are marching up and

MEAL TIME ON A RUSSIAN FARM.

down the pavements of the main street, in two opposing streams, eyeing one another, just as the young men and women march up and down the main streets of a hundred towns in England on Sunday nights.

Droshkies, driven by fat men—and if they are not fat by nature a bed-quilt round the waist produces the proper effect—scurry along the jolty ways, for, though the Russian is a slow individual, he loves to be hauled by three horses at a speed suitable to a Roman chariot race.

There are police about, sitting on droop-headed little Siberian ponies—fearsome, bearded individuals with big revolvers and big swords. Their time is devoted to swearing at the furious drivers, who swear back and drive more furiously. They do not seem to be on the look for revolutionaries. Yet two revolutionaries, accompanying a gentle-eyed foreigner, pass under their squat noses.

Lots of soldiers are promenading, Cossacks even, importations to slice up people who will attend prohibited meetings.

A prohibited meeting is to be held to-night. The Cossacks dawdle along and leer at the girls. They have not heard of the meeting. So we jostle and are jostled.

It is really a very pleasant Sunday evening. The bells of the gaudy domed Russian churches are booming. And quietly, secretly, men soaked in the revolutionary movement are making their way to a secret meeting. I am not a revolutionary, have no sympathy with political reform by bomb-throwing,

and yet have sought the aid of a Russian acquaintance who is to take me to this unlawful assembly. My chief motive is curiosity. Yet as we edge our way through the throng I find myself wondering whether, if I happen to be bagged with the rest, curiosity will be considered a terrible offence by the Russian police.

Without speaking we reach the more decrepit part of the town. The streets are neglected, the lamps dim, and the place seems a warren of shanties. Two men are ahead; another two on the far side of the way are squelching their way through filth.

Beneath a wheezy lamp stands a soldier with bayonet fixed, a brutish, unintelligent fellow, who challenges us. We are going to the house of Nicolai Ivanovitch, and could he tell us where he lived? What Ivanovitch—for Russia is as prolific of Ivanovitches as England is of Smiths. Why Nicolai! He is an employé at the gasworks; he is to be married to-morrow, and is going to Saratov. Doesn't the soldier know him? We promised to go and drink a bottle of vodki with him. No, the soldier knew nothing about him. So we go on.

Our gasworking friend Ivanovitch, who is to be wedded on the morrow, is a myth.

"Oh, that soldier fellow is a fool," says my Russian with a quiet laugh. He has been twice in prison for selling pamphlets criticising the Government. "You can take enormous chances in Russia, relying always on the stupidity of the officials. Much nonsense is believed about the wonderful network

of the Russian secret police. Tut, we fool them every time."

"They get you by the heels now and then," I remark.

"That is not their cleverness. That is due to traitors among ourselves. We are playing a big game, and we have to spy on one another. When a traitor wants to sell us, he likes to get money in advance from the police. He's sure to take to vodki drinking. Then we spy on him. If we are sure we just kill him—and the soldiers are blamed, the fools."

The third man slips away. We shall see him later, but not till the hall is reached. We have got well beyond the range of the Sunday night pedestrians. It is quite dark, and most of the houses look deserted. All is very quiet save the occasional shriek of a steamer on the Volga.

"Now we're all right," says my companion.

"But this is just the sort of place," say I, "where we could be pounced upon and arrested, and nobody the wiser.

"Oh, if the police knew they would have had a regiment of soldiery here already. If they get to know, our pickets will give good warning. But we don't want the meeting broken up. No gendarme dare touch us here; the life would soon be knocked out of him."

Just for an instant we stand and listen. We hear the singing of some drunken roysterers. "That's all right."

"What is?" I ask.

"You see, we hold our meetings in different parts. When everything is all right several of our men go off singing and pretending they are drunk. That is an easy signal which we all understand. Here!"

A heavy door leading into an unpainted log house is pushed open, and we tumble down a step into an earth-floor room, lit by a solitary candle, and with a woman on her knees puffing at the glowing embers of charcoal in a *samovar*—the boiling water for the refreshing Russian tea. She takes no notice. We leave by the open window, and are in a yard. I knock my shins against the shafts of a cart.

So to a flat-stepped ladder which leads to a loft. Keep still. I can hear a man speaking in steady, level monotone, with no attempt evidently at being subdued.

The door yields and we are in a loft, raftered and cobwebbed, but with rough settles about, an audience of some forty or fifty men, solemn-faced men, and three or four women of what is usually called an uncertain age. A white-bearded, patriarchal old man is standing behind a table. On it are two cheap paraffin lamps.

The first words I hear as I seek a plank seat on a shadowy side, where it is necessary to lean forward to hinder one's head banging into the sloping roof, are a protest against violence. The white-whiskered old man is speaking with the sorrow of long experience. His face is heavily lined; his eyes are sunken; there is no colour in his cheek. Yet there is vivacity in his manner.

"I understand, I understand," he pleads, "that the younger men are impatient for the coming of the dawn. But violence alienates from us those who would go with us, but would not sanction violence. I have suffered as you know. I am a Pole, and forty-six years ago I was exiled to Siberia because of politics. I can go back to Poland now if I wish, but I have forgotten my Polish. There are Terrorists, robbers, in the land, with whom we have no sympathy. The Government wants the outer world to think all revolutionaries are pickpockets and robbers of banks. I think the assassination of the Governor of Samara a month ago was a mistake. I hear he really meant very well."

There are grunts of dissent. The old man looks round.

A crop-headed, spectacled, wiry man, all in a quiver, jumps to his feet.

"A mistake! it was a judgment! You know what he did in the south of the Province, where there were the riots, and two of the country police were killed. He went down to the district and had the two corpses carried into every cottage, and a religious service held over the bodies of the men who had knouted innocent women. No, it was no mistake."

"Who told you that story?" asked a bluff, ripe-cheeked, black-whiskered man, with a laugh. "I know the extreme wing who did it, and it was for quite another cause. An inquiry came from the Central Revolutionary Committee in Moscow if Samara was ready, and the hot-heads showed they

were ready by bombing the Governor. Oh, there was nothing against him personally."

"You speak against violence," said a man who did not rise, but sat heavily, pulled his fingers, and kept his glance on the ground as though he were addressing someone at his feet; "you speak against violence, but what do you think is a cure for what happened on the Siberia line the other day. A railway clerk was in the train with two soldiers. He was reading his newspaper, and the soldiers were talking about the Duma and why it was closed. They disagreed, and appealed to the clerk to tell them what had taken place. He told them. Then one asked him about the Viborg manifesto—the address to the people of Russia issued by the members of the Duma when they were no longer allowed to meet in Petersburg. He happened to have a copy of that manifesto in his pocket, and he gave it to the soldiers so they might read for themselves. Then when the train got to a station the soldiers jumped out and told a gendarme the clerk was distributing seditious literature. He was arrested, and is now lying under the charge of endeavouring to induce soldiers to break their oath of loyalty to the Czar. What is your remedy for that state of things?"

"Those soldiers will get twenty roubles (£2) each for giving information," exclaims a man from the throng. There is a laugh.

"Twenty roubles is a lot to a soldier who ordinarily gets forty-eight kopeks (a shilling) a month, and has to buy his own soap." The speaker laughs

softly, and then adds: "The Government would rather give twenty roubles reward for the arrest of a man than it would give money to feed the *moudjiks* —and they will be dying like flies in a month, for the famine has come."

"I was reading in the papers the Government intend to give fifty million roubles to relieve the starving," observes the old man who had spoken first, and is now seated and shading his seared features from the glare of the lamps by arching his gnarled fingers above his eyebrows.

There is a guffaw.

"Oh," remarks the good-natured man, stroking his beard, "the Government will give the money, and the officials will pocket half, and the other half will arrive when the *moudjiks* are dead." He smiles at his own joke.

The talk is casual, fragmentary, jumping from topic to topic, dealing with the life of a nation, the death of individuals, and through it all runs a streak of cynicism. Most of the men are playing the great game, revolution, where the stakes are heavy, and the loser goes to his grave.

The two cheap lamps, flaring though they are, lack power to illuminate the whole of this dingy loft. Much of it is in gloom. As my eye struggles to pierce the blackness, I feel a chill crisping of the flesh. I can see a heap in a corner—a crouching man surely! For full two minutes I watch. Then I laugh. When my eye is accustomed I see it is nothing but a crumpled sack.

The whole situation is dramatic, eerie—and yet,

when one is reasonable, neither eerie nor dramatic, but just a bunch of men sitting easily, smoking cigarettes, and talking revolution. The old Pole is the only man with grey hairs in the crowd. There are some men in early middle age, with fixed, set countenance—excepting the well-fed genial man with the black beard and fresh complexion—and the flicks of the lamp spur their eyes with fire. But most are young men in the black shirts of the middle class in far towns of Russia, about twenty-five years of age, two at least not more than seventeen—intellectual of countenance, with well-cut features, and with the fixity of expression only seen in the faces of those who feel they have a great mission, and are willing to dare much to prosecute it.

"Is the Englishman one of us?" is suddenly asked as an aside.

I had prepared my acquaintance for such a question. I was not. I was friendly to the Russian people—I had travelled much among them, and received many kindnesses from officials. I was anxious to see all sides of the great dispute, and was trying to form a fair opinion without saying I sided with the Government or not. The men nodded.

"If you stayed with us a year, you would understand many things that are now dark to you," said a man with gold-rimmed glasses, leaning across. "You have been brought up in a constitutional country. It is hard for you to understand why we shoot and throw bombs. Don't think we like it. We can't hold public meetings without imprisonment; we are never allowed to criticise the Govern-

ment; the people, and especially the poorest of the people, are squeezed and squeezed with heavy taxes. Bomb-throwing is our only weapon."

"We are living under a Government of brigands," declares a woman with energy. She is the youngest of her sex present, and the plainness of her countenance is relieved by a certain sweetness. She is a bundle of nerves. Though she speaks in a subdued tone, I feel there is a volcano of determination in her bosom. "Not till every member of the Government has been got rid of will Russia be able to show its real power. People sneer at the *moudjik*, and say he is ignorant and not fit to vote. Whose fault is that—not his! I was teaching in the west of the Province at the time of the elections, fixed at the time of the thaw, when travelling was most difficult. The villages selected the men who had to vote for them, *moudjiks* like themselves. Some of the polling places were fifty miles away. Well, many of them walked; it took them three days to reach the place, and then three days it took to walk back in the foul weather of the thaw. It cost many of them five roubles (10s.)—not much; but a *moudjik* lives on a rouble and a half a month; and they sacrificed the price of six months' food so they might vote. Didn't that show the earnestness of the men. Are they as earnest in your land?"

"Oh, lots of my countrymen won't vote at all unless they are taken to the polling booth in a motor car," I reply, with an attempt at airiness.

"Good God!" cries the woman, unheeding, "they talk about our excesses, about killing. There

never was a revolution in the world's history accomplished with so little bloodshed as this is being accomplished. Let people think of the French Revolution—we've had no horrors like that. And do people think of the excesses of the Government? We sacrifice some of them, but why don't they reckon the thousands they have sacrificed? Patience! I'm sick of patience. The time has come when patience has ceased to be a virtue." Though the light is uncertain, I see the colour of passionate enthusiasm has covered her cheek.

It is a strange meeting, without form or precedence. Each speaks as he feels disposed. The spoken thoughts of one are fuel to another's words. There is no oratory—and yet it is not conversation. The words are simple, colloquial, easily born, and their very simplicity gives them dignity.

"And now they intend to imprison all the members of the late Duma," says a big, unwieldy man in heavy sledge-hammer tones. Everybody smiles. "Yes," he goes on, "it is easy to see the humour of it. I wonder what the outer world thinks of the Czar and his Government, who give us a Parliament and then imprison the members because they say what their constituents want them to say. The Government think that having put our delegates into prison we shall all be glad to vote for their nominees, every-one belonging to the Black Hundred."

There is a roar of laughter at this. Mothers frighten their children to sleep by declaring one of the Black Hundred is coming. When a droshki driver has a dispute with a "fare," his final taunt is

that he belongs to the Black Hundred. "The Government must think we are children," adds the man.

"Have the same delegates you had in the last Duma, or boycott the next elections—make them a farce," exclaims one of the other women, who had long been nursing her elbows and showing no sign. "That is the policy for the Russian people: the people we choose ourselves, or we ignore the elections."

There is approval. Here in this shadowy barn on the banks of the Volga, the decision is registered in secret meeting that the Duma, if packed with the nominees of the Government, shall be no more than a parody of representative assemblies. That is the decision come to in nearly every hamlet in Russia.

The word is to go forth in Samara that compromisers with the Government be not heeded. So let it be.

All along we expect the meeting will be attacked, and that the dark night will ring with the rattle of bullets whilst we attempt an escape. For one minute we receive a fright. There comes the whisper that mounted gendarmes are appearing. We were about to scatter as speedily and silently as possible when reassurance came. It was only a couple of soldiers riding home.

We disperse, in ones and twos, rarely in threes. As I go down the ladder and tumble about the yard I fancy every corner is hiding a gendarme. In the dark I shake hands with unknown men. My acquaintance tugs at my sleeve. I follow him along

the side of a mud wall till we come to a crude gate, which creaks villainously as we push it open. We are in another yard, what kind I know not, but long. We come to a high gate, and somebody opens it and bids us a husky good-night. We step briskly into the middle of the road and stand still.

Not a sound until there comes the distinct rattle of droshki wheels over the cobbles. Then there is an echoing siren yell from a Volga steamboat. In one of the cottages a woman is singing. We make a circuitous route, talking and laughing, to hide suspicion. But I am not quite happy till we are in the main streets.

A RURAL COURT.

(From the Painting by M. T. Zostchenko, Galérie Trétiakoff.)

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BLACK HUNDRED.

Revolutionaries and the Champions of the Czar—The Press of the Black Hundred—The Proposed Visit of "Representatives of the British People"—Where the Funds come from—How the Authorities wink at Murder and Massacre—Stage-managed Effusions of Loyalty—Members of the Black Hundred.

IF Mr. W. S. Gilbert has still his cunning, and were cynical enough, he would to-day find in Russia material for a diverting libretto, quaintly, whimsically topsy-turvy.

There are the revolutionaries—as various in their creeds as Christians. They desire to overthrow autocracy, and their weapons range from enlightened pamphlets to furious harangues, bomb-throwing, the raiding of vodki shops, and pilfering from affrighted females at street corners.

On the other hand, there is an unofficial body called the Union of the Russian People. They do not like the revolutionaries. They are the champions of the Czar, the patriots of Russia, the denouncers of all tampering with the dignity of the empire. They object to revolutionary pamphlets, and issue pamphlets of their own, calling upon all good Russians to slay vermin. They deliver

speeches against rousing hatred, and they denounce the Jews and their friends the English. Assassination is a barbarous weapon, and they put it down by encountering professional assassins in side streets, and killing them. Robbery is a crime, so they only pillage the Hebrews.

These form the Union of the Russian People. But their enemies call them the Black Hundred.

Black Hundred is a literal translation, but it has no literal meaning. A Cossack squadron is a hundred. The Cossack is the savage irregular soldier, reputed to be ever willing to do the foul killing work that the regular Russian soldiers have no stomach for. So the phrase Black Hundred is intended to mean a gang of men who will do things to exterminate the enemies of the Russian Government which the Russian Government do not like to be seen doing themselves.

I have met members of the Black Hundred, educated men—who have given the term to themselves with a laugh because they are supporters of the autocratic *régime*—and ruffians who would have shot me dead had I called them so, for it is a title of insult.

The Black Hundred have their newspapers. In one which came to me was an article on the absence of the leader of the cause of emancipation in Finland. Here is the translation of a sentence or two:—

> The rebel chief has fled abroad. The former President of the dispersed Imperial Duma has

COSSACKS SEARCHING CITIZENS FOR REVOLVERS HELP THEMSELVES TO OTHER THINGS.

SATIRE ON THE "BLACK HUNDRED."

(Prohibited Picture Postcards from Moscow.)

run away. The wise scoundrel has acted prudently. The reason is that in a few days it is intended that Jews from England should assemble in St. Petersburg to thank him for his activity as a hooligan and a robber.

Of course, these filthy guests of ours will have a bad time with us in any case, because the Russian people have awakened from their sleep. The dawn is coming, and the reptiles must crawl away to their homes lest they no longer remain alive. Therefore this robber-chief, foreseeing what was coming, has gone abroad, to exchange the kiss of peace with his friends the Jews.

The English Jews are collecting money for our democrats, so they may make bombs and shoot and rob and occupy themselves with all kinds of blackguardly deeds.

That is a sample of the kind of article appearing in Black Hundred publications apropos of the abandoned visit of the "representatives of the British people" to express sympathy with the Russian democrats in their struggle to be free.

The Black Hundred were going to give a lively time to those excellent English gentlemen had they put in an appearance at Petersburg, and especially at Moscow. No mob is so easily inflamed as a Russian mob.

The British are liked individually by Russians, but as a race most cordially hated. Russians hate Jews individually and collectively. To say in Russia you are a friend of the Jews is to place your-

self beyond the pale of Christianity as understood in the Czar's dominions. A hit on the head with a bludgeon is your proper punishment.

All trains were set in motion to rouse a demonstration against the "friends of the Jewish vermin." Had my countrymen arrived on their noble sympathetic mission I am certain I should have seen them marching down the Nevski Prospect guarded from the infuriated people whom they had come to applaud by the soldiers of the Government which they intended to denounce. A nice Gilbertian situation!

The Black Hundred is a purely Russian institution, which could hardly be conceived in a land that had not an Asiatic tinge. When it is first explained to you by a Russian gentleman, who politely calls it the "Soiouz Rousskavo Gharoda," you would imagine it endowed with all the charm of the Primrose League, having the same aims, with a Russian setting, and kept flourishing by much the same means.

If the rural policeman in England allowed only folks with Primrose League badges to stand on the roadside and to cheer the King and Queen as they passed, whilst soldiers at the bayonet point had driven Radicals and all such dangerous fellows into the adjoining woods and so beyond eye-shot of passing Royalty, the proceeding would be just on a par with the cheers of the Black Hundred when the Czar goes past.

It is possible—until the yeast of discontent began working a year or two ago—that the Emperor

A JEWISH HOUSE AFTER A "POGROM."

and Empress might have ridden through Petersburg and Moscow to the tune of tumultuous cheering by the populace. But that was never allowed. Only those known to the police ever got anywhere near Royalty. When there were peasants to be about they were carefully-selected peasants.

Don't blame the authorities. They did not want to take risks. They wanted the Czar to be cheered, but they wanted no mishaps. Hence the usefulness of the Union of the Russian people. The members are all described as "of good promise," which means they do not concern themselves with politics —at least, not until recently.

Till the present troubles came the Union of the Russian People was chiefly useful in keeping people docile, accepting things as they are, and as likely to find fault with the Government as they would be with Providence.

Now the whole machinery of the organisation has been turned against revolutionaries of whatever degree. Its members have become active. They have come into blazing prominence under the contemptuous title of Black Hundred. The better class Russians have slipped out of sight, and the rapscallions have mustered in force.

If suddenly the Primrose League ceased to be illumined by the graceful presence of dame-presidents and was flooded with the riff-raff of the populace, who got money from somewhere, spent their days drinking in Soho cafés, went forth at night and killed foreigners and smashed Radicals into senseless pulp, while the police stood on one side and

grinned—you would again get near a parallel with the Russian Black Hundred.

Once more, if the Primrose League had the reputation of using the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral for printing inflammatory placards—as the Black Hundred are alleged to utilise the cellars of the great Monastery at Kiev — calling upon Englishmen to "kill the Jewish vermin," you would get a further idea of the workings of the Black Hundred.

The active members of this association get money—from somewhere. The revolutionary will tell you at once "It is from the Government." The Russian revolutionary is ever quick with "absolutely authentic information," which, however, is often based on nothing stouter than supposition. I have learnt never to believe a Russian official and never to accept the statement of a revolutionary. The official always minimises the truth; the revolutionary invariably magnifies it.

That the Government deliberately advances money to the Black-Hundred is hard to believe. There are plenty of others, who have got much to lose if a revolution is accomplished in Russia, men who honestly think they are resisting anarchy, and who give their money to the organising heads of the Black Hundred just as worthy and wealthy English gentlemen throw their thousands into the chests of political associations.

The ways of the Black Hundred are crude. But they support the Government; they cry, "Long live the Czar! Death to rebels and extermination to the Jews!" The Government accordingly can

hardly be expected to suppress the Union of the Russian People.

The authorities may be called sympathetic. When the revolutionaries kill there is vengeance; when the Black Hundred kill the authorities do nothing. Revolutionary literature is torn from the walls; Black Hundred literature is allowed to remain.

Students were and are the red rag to the Black Hundred bull. Many a young fellow has met his death for no other reason than that he was a student. Emissaries of the Black Hundred, convinced that the student's uniform is equivalent to a revolutionary badge, have thrown young men over bridges and knocked out their brains with boulders whilst they attempted to swim ashore.

The striking and outstanding fact is that the authorities never under any circumstances interfere with the Black Hundred.

A cardinal principle of the Black Hundred is: Hate the Jews. It is in the nature of the Russian to have goose-flesh in the presence of a Jew. In Russia the Jew has no friends.

A bit of an Asiatic, a bit of a barbarian, a bit of a fanatic, the Russian is easily roused against the Jews. The *pogroms* which at intervals have blazed throughout Russia like beacon fires have never been sporadic, but always planned, and the Black Hundred have invariably applied the match.

I have talked to dozens of people who witnessed the slaughter, not Jews or revolutionaries fond of colouring all their stories, but Englishmen who are

not revolutionaries, and have no affection for the Jews, and always the story was the same: the soldiery looked on whilst the slaughter was in progress, and laughed at the wild shrieks of the Jew before he was battered.

I have not the slightest doubt there are honourable men in the Czar's Government who believe the official reports that such things did not take place. Unfortunately, independent and trustworthy evidence is all the other way. That is one of the horrors of the Russian situation. The Union of the Russian People, with the connivance of the authorities, savagely butcher a section of the populace.

When you read of the crimes of the revolutionaries it is well to think also of the crimes of the Black Hundred.

And when you have thought of both, and got a glimmering of what it means, it is time to pray, "God help Russia."

One of the functions of the Black Gang is to provide the "crowds of loyal and enthusiastic subjects" when it is found necessary to put the Emperor in good heart with a patriotic demonstration. Public displays are stage-managed, so even newspaper correspondents are deceived. If they could be present at the arrangements for a State ceremonial, they would see groups of men brought along in charge of a policeman, and each policeman reports to a superior that the "demonstrators" are of the right sort. The cheering, as the Czar passes, is done under command, and if his Majesty enters by one door and leaves by another, the "crowd" is hur-

ried round to form another throng of strong-lunged citizens. Sometimes dutiful addresses are presented by "representative workmen," who usually are police agents in disguise.

During the Russo-Japanese War the people were indifferent as to the outcome. If there were any manifestations it was of delight at defeat of the Russian arms. The mass never regarded it as a conflict between the peoples of the two countries, but of Japan fighting the Russian Government. Every catastrophe was regarded not as a blow at Russia, but at the Government. Therefore it was "Hurrah for the Japanese!"

However, it was necessary to show the Czar that the people were frantic with enthusiasm for the success of the Russian troops. So there were hired several hundred individuals, equivalent to the sandwich-board class in London, who were paid a rouble each, and with a portrait of the Czar and some flags they marched to the residences of high officials and "demonstrated." The fellows, knowing they were under police protection, became so enthusiastically jubilant that they forced their way into restaurants and helped themselves. They had such a good time that all the ruffians and wastrels joined in, and the price of service fell to sixpence a day. The result was much hooligan conduct in the streets.

Moscow was notorious for these outbursts of "loyal fervour." Everybody understood. One outcome was to provoke counter demonstrations with the red flag at the head of the processions.

There were furious battles. The police supplied the Black Gang with knives and revolvers, and bloody was the end.

The Black Gang waxed strong. The authorities recognised the use to which it could be put. They were excellent instruments for *pogroms*. In one month, October, 1905, there were killed in a couple of weeks in more than a hundred towns nearly four thousand Jews, to say nothing of ten thousand who were injured and the amount of damage done to property. The police never interfered in the massacres. At times officers in uniform led the ruffians and pointed out the houses which should be attacked. The leaders of *pogroms* are rewarded with appointments, in which there is plenty of room for gain by corruption.

When I was in Nijni-Novgorod I happened to remark casually in the presence of some officials my sympathy with the endeavour of the Government to suppress disorder. I was at once offered a card, the official document of the Black Hundred, which I was assured would save me from molestation if in my "poking about" for information I ran into a disturbance. I said, "No, thank you." Months later on a steamer on the Black Sea I had long talks with a parcel of students who were anxious to hear about methods of government in England. When I stated vigorously that no party recognised assassination as a political argument the instant comment was: "Then you must be a member of the Black Hundred."

Though, of course, there are many gradations,

everybody in Russia—in terms of revilement—is either an "Anarchist" or belongs to the Black Hundred.

It is calculated that throughout Russia are some 50,000 members of the Union of the Russian People —not many in a population of a hundred millions, but all organisers of movements against the revolutionaries. Many of these men are public servants, not always willing members, for their names are enrolled by their superiors. The cost of membership is 4d.

It is a very useful association to professional thieves, for to show their tickets saves much inconvenient attention at the hands of the police.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE AGRARIAN DISTRESS.

The Black Lands—The Russian Farmer—Ignorance and Credulity—Politics of the Peasantry—Criticising the Czar—The Revolution Social rather than Political—"Little Citizens"—What the Peasant really cares for—Some Elementary Facts—Incidents of the Famine of 1891—Taxation—The Peasants' Land Bank—The Agrarian Situation to-day.

I INVESTIGATED the agrarian question in the southern districts of Bessarabia, where the harvest of 1906 had been good, and in the trans-Volga provinces, where it had been bad.

Between Kiev, the religious centre of Russia, and the Black Sea, I wandered over the famous black lands. The earth is like soot, dark, rich, the best in the world. Providence had been gracious. The harvest was bountiful, prodigious, unexampled.

But as I journeyed I saw with painful clearness that the Russian is no farmer. There are six-and-seventy perfectly plausible explanations why he is as he is. But the fact still remains: he is the worst farmer in Europe.

At harvest time, when he should be busy, he lazes in the sun; he drinks tea and sings, and is happy. Why worry? *Nichevo* is the one word which contains the philosophy of the peasant.

PEASANT PILGRIMS TO KIEV.

There are Deutsch colonies in South Russia—folk who came in Catherine's time from Prussia, who speak a bastard tongue and call their villages Stuttgart and Mannheim and the like. I saw German villages, clean, trim, profitable. I went on ten or twenty versts, and came to Russian villages, dirty, bedraggled, wretched, miserable, not far from starvation.

Now and then, but not often, was a Russian farm fairly productive. That was because the proprietor had assimilated modern ideas, manuring and taking proper care of the land. His farm neighbours, however, never admitted that. All talk would not get out of their heads that somehow they had been swindled, that they had the poor lands, and the richer folk had got the better lands. That the difference in the yield was due to better management they could not understand.

The ignorance of the peasant is something which the Western mind finds it difficult to realise. A big proprietor, with modern machines, prospers where the peasants fail. The peasants are positive it is all due to roguery. So they burn the farmsteads of the richer man, and glory in the blazing granaries. When all are ashes they find foodstuffs are decreased. They are very sorry; they hunger; they say it is cruel of the Government to leave them without food!

There is something woefully childish about the peasant. Much of the country in the south is devoted to beet-rearing and sugar factories. Under the idea they are hitting at the cruel capitalist,

peasants raze a beet factory to the ground. Only then do they realise they have put themselves out of work. When they hunger they weep, and say the Government is harsh because they do not build the factories again to give employment.

I met lots of peasants who were sure, despite all I told them to the contrary, that the Czar had decreed the land belonged to those who worked it. Many had taken forcible possession, looted buildings, stolen cattle and grain belonging to the legitimate owners, and were mightily indignant that the Government had sent Cossacks to hinder them from further pillage.

"The land is ours," was the constant cry of the peasants. Their idea of the Duma is an institution which will take the land from the wealthy and divide it among the peasantry. Yet the peasantry already have the greater part of agricultural land. I took pains to secure accurate statistics. Of farming land in European Russia there are 791,408,750 acres; of these, 228,019,000 belong to private owners and 435,649,500 to peasants. Thus the peasants have 55 per cent. against 29 per cent. held by private owners. The difficulty is the peasant has not enough to keep alive.

In "Little Russia," the governments of Kiev, Poltava, Podolia, Chernigof, and Kharkof, the peasants have 56 per cent. of the land. The average is $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres to each soul of the peasant population. In the southern governments, Bessarabia, Taurida, Ekaterinoslav, and Kherson, the average is $5\frac{1}{2}$ acres to each soul of the peasant population. Mr. Vice-

RUSSIAN GREETING TO BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM.

Consul Smith, of Kiev, says, however, it is not the want of land which keeps the peasantry from making both ends meet, but the want of knowledge and energy to cultivate and get the most out of the area they already possess. It is a notorious fact that the harvest of the peasantry is never more than one-third or one-fourth of the harvest reaped by large tenant farmers or proprietors endowed with sufficient capital to work their land. "The State Peasants' Land Bank provides the means to enable the peasantry to acquire more land upon easy terms, and the little capital possessed by the peasantry goes to meet the first or purchasing instalment. They are thus left without working capital to buy proper implements or sufficient stock to work the land in a rational and remunerative manner. The land is 'hungered,' and the peasant can only see salvation in the possession of better-worked land belonging to the landowners."

All peasants are revolutionaries. All want a Duma. But they only want a Duma because they believe it will decide they shall have more land than at present. Nothing shows more clearly the average peasant idea of politics than what took place near Kicheneau, in Bessarabia. The Zemstvo had been advancing money to the peasants to obtain modern implements. Bad times meant the Zemstvo made bad debts. But the harvest being good this year the Zemstvo endeavoured to recover. The peasants did not deny their indebtedness, but they declined to pay because: "We are waiting for the election of the new Duma, which will forgive us the payment"!

"The Duma" is the infallible remedy for all Russia's ills—according to a hundred million of the population. The peasant has a happy hope that with a Parliament sitting in Petersburg the earth will change, crops will always be a maximum, everyone will have more land, nobody will have to be a soldier, all taxes will be abolished. It is all a matter of simple faith—just as they believe in the freshness of the flesh of the "imperishable saints," whom they kiss through a discreet shroud. May they learn the truth by degrees!

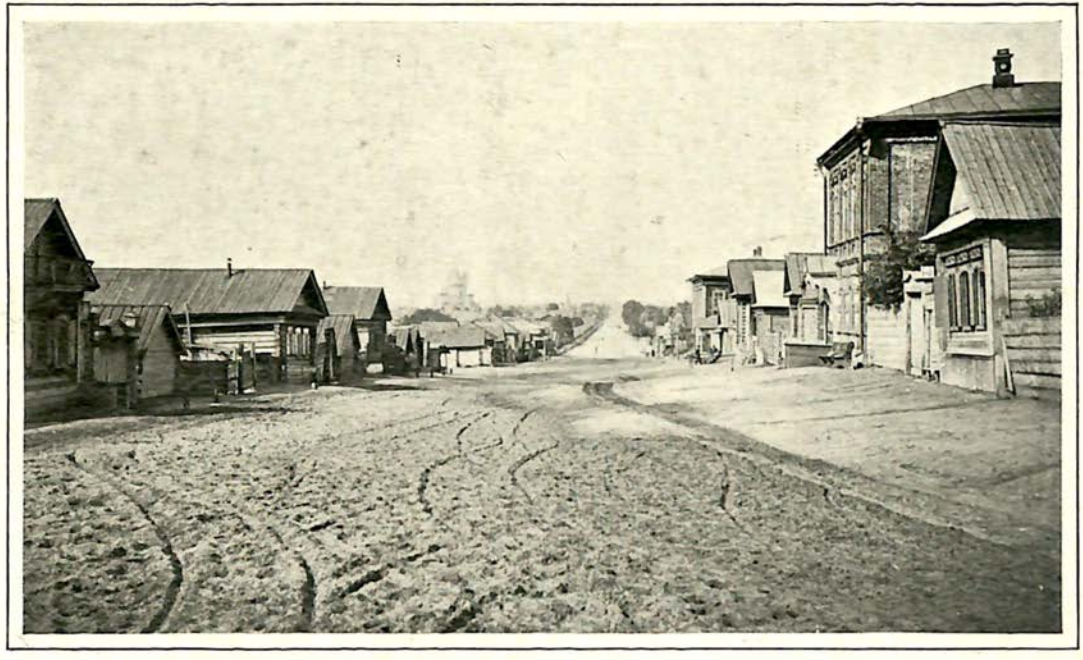
A distinct change in demeanour I noticed among the peasants compared with a few years ago when last I was in Russia. The way the Czar was referred to is one evidence. In former days God and the Czar were mentioned in the same breath, and it was not always the Czar who was named second. The Emperor was a mighty and mysterious personality, only to be referred to with awe. Not so now.

In a fourth-class railway carriage I fell to talking with a quiet-mannered old peasant. The Duma was soon the topic of conversation—it is always the Duma. When was it to meet again? Why was the Duma abolished? Was not the Czar the Little White Father, and did he not love his people? Could I say if the Czar often went to the Duma?

I told him the Czar was present at the opening of the Duma, and had not been again.

But why did he not go every day?

Oh, the Czar was a busy man, and had other important things.



A TYPICAL TOWN IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES.

Yes, yes, the peasant said, but surely there was nothing more important than that he should know the wishes of his people? And did the members of the Duma often go and see the Czar?

Oh, no; he would hear through Ministers what took place.

The old man shook his head. "That is not the way; that is not the right way," he said.

The tinge of mild criticism was a wonderful change from the way a peasant would have referred to the Emperor half a dozen short years ago.

The peasant mind is in a ferment. The revolution is bubbling. Though the agitation throughout Russia is thought to be political, politics, as understood in England, have very little to do with it. It is a social revolution—the great, lethargic, ignorant Muscovite mass becoming conscious that it is about to come into its heritage, and that those who are rich and own much land have got it all by robbery. When roused by the doctrines of social-democracy, preached to them by some glib youth who has lived in the towns, the peasants run amok, pillage and burn the property of the big landowners. The Cossacks are summoned, and the punishments inflicted upon the marauders are not gentle.

But often, without the intervention of the military, the peasants see their foolishness and are sorry to tears. It is not unusual for them to destroy their own means of livelihood. I know of a case where the peasants gave notice to the local magnate they intended to fire the granaries, smash the agricultural implements, and then seize the land.

"Very well," said the owner, "and when you have done that you will have brought the Cossacks upon you; you will have no food for the winter; you won't have the means of sowing; and, though you may have the land, there will be no crops next year."

Then rueful scratchings of the head. "Yes, that is so," said the peasants; "we didn't think of all that."

It is a simple and rather stupid story, but it is very typical of the mental condition of these benighted folk.

It is hard for English people to understand the melancholy, monotonous, drab life of these peasants. The villages which dot the dun, lonely and featureless steppes, heaving to eternity, like a Pacific swell, are just points of wretchedness in the landscape. There is no education. There are no "county families." There is no good example. Two distractions has the peasant: to crowd the village church on Saturday night, kiss the ikons, light tapers, and on the Sunday get maudlin drunk on vodki, which makes him bestially affectionate rather than quarrelsome.

In the Kherson Government are fewer peasant proprietors. A section of the people are just labourers—"little citizens" they are called—and retain some of the privileges of the old serfdom in that they cannot be dispossessed of their dwellings. And such dwellings! They consist of a hole dug in the earth, square-sided, and the rests of the roof are on a level with the ground. At a distance these cottages look like potato mounds. The landowner

may try to get rid of them by removing the door, but he cannot drive them away, however lazy and drunken they be. They have black bread, tea, and occasionally cabbage soup — such is their diet. Simple though the fare is, they are a fine-set, broad-built, well-nurtured race—an ideal peasantry if only they would work and were not soaked in apathetic fatalism.

The conditions, the sloth, the lack of enterprise, are due in much measure to the oppression of officialdom and the squeezing by taxation of the few kopeks the men are able to earn. And yet there is something sadly humorous in the demands of these people that Russia should be governed on strictly democratic lines. That is something they have learnt from the towns. My own impression is that the peasants care very little about constitutional government. Were there not constant jerking agitation in the great centres, the political revolution in agrarian areas would lapse from sheer inertia. There is only one thing the peasant sees ahead—the prospect of getting more and better land without having to pay for it. There his politics begin, and there they end.

There are certain elementary facts to be borne in mind in considering the agrarian conditions:

Each family cultivates on an average seven times more land than in Western Europe.

Whilst the land is as good as the average Western Europe land, the yield of grain per hectare (2½ acres) is 380 kilograms, whilst in other countries it is 1,300.

In Russia one quarter of the total harvest is used for seed, and in other countries only one-twelfth.

Russia annually exports £40,000,000 worth of cereals, whilst medical investigators declare that the consumption of bread is habitually 30 per cent. below the quantity necessary to preserve the vital force of an adult.

During the last twenty years stock has decreased: horses, 20 per cent.; calves, 40 per cent.; sheep, 71 per cent.; pigs, 87 per cent.; cows, 50 per cent.

The peasant spends 7 per cent. of his gross earnings on vodki—the actual value of which is ⅔ per cent., so that the State, which holds the monopoly, gets 6⅓ per cent. as its share.

The peasants pay in taxation 45 per cent. of their total income.

Now, when serfdom was abolished the peasants were given an opportunity of taking over their lands. But the combination of sloth, defective harvests, and heavy taxation has prevented them paying the dues. Yearly the arrears of redemption money have grown. The peasants have accordingly fallen within the power of the big landowners; so I doubt whether their condition is any way better than in the days of serfdom.

Later I shall deal with the terror of famine in 1906-7 in the trans-Volga provinces. Here let me recall some of the incidents of the great famine of 1891. Then nearly 40,000,000 souls were brought

ON THE STEPPES.

to such destitution that they had to live upon acorns, grass, and bark bread. Yet the special commissioner of the Government reported there was no famine; the assertion that it existed was declared to be a political move to discredit the Government. Editors were commanded by the censors to publish no news about the famine to "disturb the public mind." When the conscience of Europe was aroused, the Government forbade the exportation of corn, the State advanced 120,000,000 roubles (about £12,000,000) to purchase corn to feed the starving, and, after much official resistance, subscriptions from abroad were allowed to come in. Rich Russians contributed to the relief, but not so readily as they would have done had not the Government undertaken the distribution themselves. There was a natural suspicion in the public mind that officials would misappropriate much of the funds. Though the rich and the poor of Russia had previously been disposed to regard each other as belonging to different strata of humanity, the conduct of the Government gave them a bond of union, and was therefore the beginning of the present revolutionary movement supported and encouraged by all classes outside official circles.

As the taxation equals 45 per cent. of a peasant's income, that practically means he must give about three days' work a week to the State. As there is difficulty in making both ends meet, the money-lender is busy in the land, so that, as a matter of fact, the peasant must give four days' work a week before he gets anything for himself. Remembering

the very low standard of agriculture in Russia, the natural laziness of the peasant, and his fondness for vodki, it is quite clear that even in years of good harvest he is near the verge of starvation, and it takes very little to push him over the edge.

The peasants, having lived so long in serfdom, have not yet become used to their emancipation. Emancipation brought land to the peasantry, but not sufficient, with bad agriculture, to maintain life and pay the heavy taxes. You cannot draw blood from a stone, and the arrears of taxation run into hundreds of millions of roubles. Further, there has been a tremendous increase in the peasant population, with no corresponding increase in the means of providing food. Since the Emancipation the peasant population has doubled, but the land held is still about the same. Hence the cry from corner to corner of the Empire for more land.

Let it not be thought nothing has been done. Nearly a quarter of a century ago (1884) there was established the Peasants' Land Bank, already alluded to, to assist peasants to acquire more land. But only some eighteen million acres have been acquired—6 per cent. more land. At first the Bank did good service, especially as the Government gave a yearly guarantee of 5,000,000 roubles. But of recent years the Bank has become little other than a loan office, and those who have chiefly benefited have not been landless peasants, but speculators in land. Nay, I have heard the allegation made that the Bank was utilised by great Ministers to get rid of their land at enormous prices, while the

peasants were compelled to acquire at exorbitant rates of interest.

There are nearly 40,000,000 peasants in Russia insufficiently provided with land. (The latest official figures I can secure are for 1905—37,587,000.) Some 180,000,000 acres would be required to satisfy the needs of the peasants.

How is that land to be obtained? Such is the mighty problem which faces all statesmen in Russia.

If all the available State lands, not under timber, were secured, there would be only one-fourteenth of the amount needed. To acquire Monastery and Church lands would be a trifling additional aid.

The solution of the problem arrived at by the vast majority of members of the late Duma came to this: There must be the expropriation of private ownership of land.

The Government absolutely refused to recognise such a principle on the ground it was confiscatory.

That is the situation to-day.

CHAPTER XV.

IN THE FAMINE REGION.

Over the Samara Steppes—Bogromnoa—Failure of the Wheat Crop—Russian Fatalism—Revolutionary Propaganda among the Peasants—Relief from Petersburg—The New Rural Police—Kazan—Scattering Revolutionaries and Disseminating Sedition—Samara Town—A Famine-stricken Province.

THE old, wan-cheeked *moudjik* turned and said: "First it was the war; then it was the revolution; now it is the famine. God help Russia. We have no food. I have sold one of my horses for twenty-four shillings, and have bought 400 lbs. of rye with it. That will keep my family alive for a month. I have two other horses, and I shall sell them. Then —then we shall have to die. I think God is wrath with Russia." The old fellow crossed himself.

We were trundling over the dun steppes of Samara Province. There was no road, but we had rude cart tracks to follow. The wind howled and moaned, and the rain slashed in drifts. The world was bleak and cold. I lay on hay in the crude, jolting, peasant's cart, with a couple of melons as elbow rest, and tried to keep warm beneath an uncured sheepskin.

If you look at a map of Russia, the east of it before you touch Siberia, you may find Buzuluk

A FAMINE-STRICKEN VILLAGE.

about half-way between Samara and Orenburg. I had travelled east from Buzuluk in a freight train, crowded with drunken Cossacks on their way "to keep the *moudjiks* quiet," an officer said to me with a leer, had tumbled out at a wayside station, made friends with the only man I could see in the world, this wizened *moudjik* in tattered sheepskins. He had a crazy cart and a decrepit nag, and I made the easiest of bargains for him to drive me to Bogromnoa, one of the blackest spots in dark Russia, where the people were hungry—a town of five thousand souls.

It was a wretched town, like a sprawling village of mud-built huts. There was no roadway, just an open space of filth between the mud huts, which were never of more than two rooms, with the thatch broken, and the places sickening with stench. They were dirty. There were no beds, but bundles of rags in corners. The *moudjiks* were big, slothful, passive, sheep-like creatures, with no harm in them. I went into what houses I chose. They teemed with children, barefooted, in greasy, single garments, and all unwashed. The women were slatterns, and most were about to become mothers again.

There are no well-to-do in Bogromnoa. I was assured that out of all the people only ten families are not in acute need. In 1905, a bad year, the crop of wheat averaged 200 lbs. to the English acre. Last year—nothing! There was a drought from March till August, and the seed withered in the ground.

At the best of times starvation is not far from the door of the peasant. Last year it crossed the threshold.

Nobody comes to Bogromnoa: no revolutionaries, for there are no rich landowners, with houses that ought to be burnt; no savage soldiers, for the people are submissive; no tax collector, for there is no money to collect. The town is like thousands in the great famine region of Russia, unknown to the world, unheeded by the world.

Everybody was disgustingly dirty; but what know they of cleanliness? I saw no drunkenness —there is no money to buy vodki. In all the houses I visited I never once saw a crust of bread—for there is no money at Bogromnoa for bread. Some food was sent by the Samara Zemstvo, being a surplus of funds contributed by the charitable to aid the sick and wounded in the Russo-Japanese War. The schoolmaster, who received no wages because there was no money, was administering relief. Bread was given each day, and twice a week one pound of meat was divided among five persons. But supplies were running short. Three peasants had set off to beg their way to St. Petersburg, hoping the Government would do something.

"And if nothing comes?" I often asked.

"We shall just die," was the answer.

There were no tears, no wringing of hands, no animus against the rich. The *moudjiks* were fatalists. If they had to die they would die—and that would be the end.

There was typhus, there was scrofula. On the

emaciated were sores, and their gums rotted. Stomachs weakened with long abstinence cannot hold food. When the feeble took it they vomited.

Because of the red riot of revolution flaming through the land, the outer world paid little heed to this greater horror, the famine which had come to Russia, more severe than fifteen years ago, when the heart of civilisation was touched. I made inquiries in the provinces of Samara, Kazan, Simbirsk, and Saratov, and everywhere the wail was the same—"We shall die if help come not soon."

Many have died.

Through most of this region was unrest. The Russian, as we have seen, is an inefficient farmer. He is lazy, will not live a ranch life, but insists on herding in villages or towns, even though his land be ten or fifteen miles away. He is drunken. "God gives," says he, and if crops rot through neglect the blame is hoisted upon the Almighty.

This last year or two, with the revolutionaries energetic in the land, the *moudjik* has come to believe that most of his misfortunes are the fault of the Government. If only the Government is changed he will have plenty of land, and there will be no drought. So he thinks.

And in plenty of regions, particularly in Kazan Province, I found that the revolutionaries are playing upon the ignorance of the soil toilers—there are eighty millions of people in Russia who are illiterate—and associating distress with the action of the Government.

As a matter of fact, the Government have given

instructions there is to be no attempt to squeeze blood out of the stone, and that those in the famine area who cannot pay the taxes, small as they are, shall not be placed under coercion. The Government decided on the expenditure of some £5,000,000 for relief of distress in kind, which was wise, instead of relief in money which the peasants desire. But the Government is politically suspicious of the Zemstvos, and instead of distributing the benefit through local agencies, on the plan that the men on the spot know best, they sent out men from Petersburg.

The ways of Russian officialdom are slow, and officials are not always honest. The consequence is that in vast tracks there was no relief until it was too late. Rye and other grain that needed sowing in the autumn was sent into some districts, but through muddledom the wrong stuff was forwarded. Besides, it was often rotten. The flour distributed was bad. The horses and the cows were, not infrequently, ancient and useless. The peasants gave them back. There were grumbles deep and sinister, first that the Government was not giving enough, and second, that of what was given much was misappropriated by officials.

The *moudjiks* are distrustful of everybody except the Social Democrats, who proclaim that when they get their rights each peasant shall have from eighty to a hundred English acres. Not a few members of the late Duma led their constituents to believe Parliament would arrange all that. Accordingly, it is easy to understand why the *moudjik*,

CHILDREN IN THE FAMINE REGION.

just scraping life out of a single English acre, does not think kindly of the Government.

All over Kazan Province the walls of cottages and telegraph poles yielded revolutionary leaflets in the night, as a low-lying meadow yields mushrooms. Who affixed them nobody can or will say. But I have seen the *strajniki* (rural police) busy with their swords scraping them off. There are "No rent" manifestos and incitements to pillage.

As the Government distrust the Zemstvos, thinking they are too much on the side of the people, so the people distrust the Zemstvos, certain they are on the side of the Government.

There is a Peasants' Bank, managed by the Zemstvo in Kazan. The money was invested in Government bonds. These bonds went down to 72. It was no good talking to the *moudjik* about national credit. The only thing he knew was that for every 100 roubles invested he could only get 72. More than a quarter had disappeared, and all the talking in the world would not make him think otherwise than that it had been stolen.

The retort was that the peasants refused to pay their taxes. They do not intend to send up their young men as conscripts for the Army. This was flagrant defiance of authority, and caused trouble. Had the Government appreciated the drift of affairs, they could easily have achieved the virtue of considerateness. The direct taxation on land is not more than a farthing an acre: a remission of taxation in all famine areas would have produced a good effect as well as have saved money; for the collec-

tion of the crippled taxes by soldiery and special police is costing far more than the return will ever be. The same applies to the recruits. Russia is hard pressed for money, and the maintenance of a couple of hundred thousand conscripts might have been saved by releasing hard-hit areas from giving their most serviceable young men. However, the evil was done in 1906, and bitter enmity reigns.

I have mentioned the *strajniki*, rural police. This is a new force created to deal with the prevailing disorders. Formerly a single gendarme was a sufficient representative of the law in a big village. Now the rapscallions of one part are engaged to go into another part to maintain order. I declare that everywhere I went I found them the provokers of disorder. They received but £2 a month and a horse, and they had to maintain themselves and their horses. They were ignorant, drunken louts—so far I can speak from personal knowledge. One of their duties was to keep townsmen out of the villages. In the eyes of the authorities a man in town attire is a propagandist of revolutionary ideas. So every one was watched. I was chivvied myself, but as I am most obviously a foreigner—and at the back of the Russian brain there is ever a big dread of what may happen if a foreigner is killed—I had no more annoyance than that of being too closely followed, and having a *strajnik* sleep on the floor outside my door in the dirty hotel in Buzuluk where I passed a night. If an attempt is made by a townsman to address the villagers, there is no arguing; the *strajniki* shoot. There is a good deal of killing.

When the villagers get one of these gentry at their mercy they beat his brains out.

Near Buzuluk is the village of Malaj Malicovka. The girls of the place were outraged by the *strajniki*. Disturbances followed; the mob ran as a Russian mob always does run, but some women who were with child could not run. So they were flogged. Then the soldiers arrived on the scene to "secure order," and many of the peasants were arrested. All the prisons were crowded.

On this eastern side of Russia, just as in Poland on the western side, I saw the Government, honestly intent, no doubt, to secure quiet, but going about it in a pig-headed way, using the old Oriental weapon of terror and brutality, and utilising the worst instruments. Cossacks were going through Kazan Province "assisting" in the collection of taxes. The instruction that the poor be left alone was interpreted as meaning those who had not a kopek. Peasants with only a few roubles in the world lied concerning their means. They were disposed to rebellion; besides, the revolutionaries had told them not to pay. They said they had nothing. The Cossacks knew they lied and proceeded to whip the life nearly out of them with the knout.

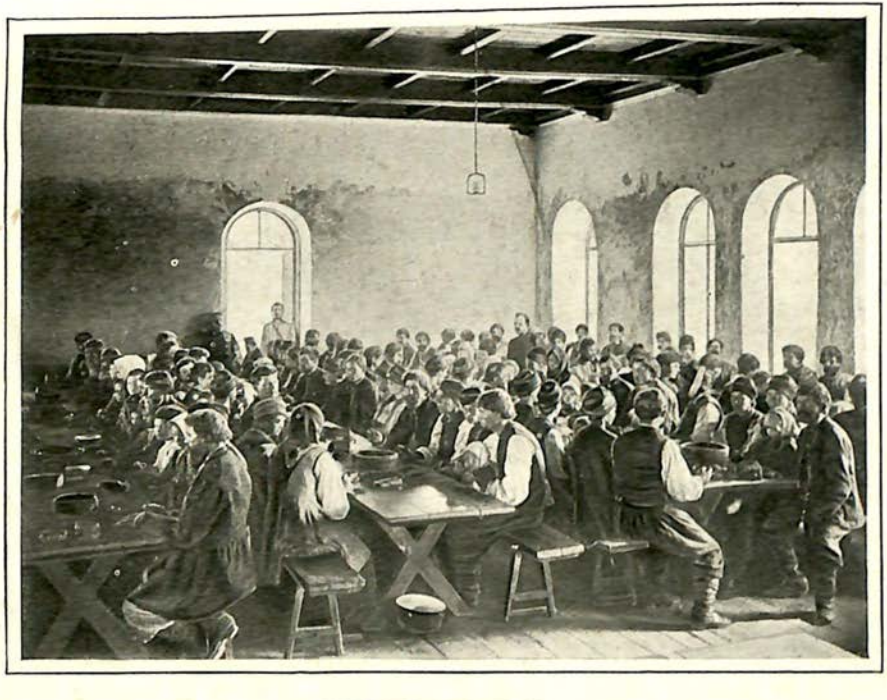
To Kazan town came three Cossack regiments, to say nothing of other troops. Machine guns were ready for emergencies. I was sick and heavy-hearted at the meek, mournful distress of thousands in Kazan. They were too hungry and weak for any kick to be left in them. They just stretched out their hands and cried that in the name of Christ

you help them. A place, something equivalent to an English soup kitchen, was opened by the kind-hearted to minister to the starving. The Governor ordered it to be closed because it brought together the hungry, and they talked over their misfortunes. So the poor were starving to death—though the Government intended to feed them, and would be prepared to do so when most of them were dead.

It was decreed that all Jews are revolutionaries. So the Kazan Hebrews were cleared out. Their passports were taken from them, and like prisoners they were removed to the towns of their birth.

That proceeding is very Russian. The idea of the way to stop disease is to spread it. The Sevastopol mutineers are scattered all over Russia—and everyone is a preacher of revolution. A regiment in Samara town—where the new doctrines are strong—gave evidence of insubordination. "All is quiet at Perm, in Siberia," said the authorities; "we will send the regiment there." So a mutinous regiment was despatched to a peaceful town. It is like a scheme to stamp out a small-pox epidemic by distributing the afflicted in districts where there is no small-pox.

In Kazan I heard of an instance of official stupidity; but it was typical. There is a university in Kazan. There arrived from Astrakhan, where she has lived with her parents for the last eleven years, a young Jewess wishing to enter as a medical student. Because she was a Jewess the authorities decided she was a revolutionary, took her passport away, and deported her in custody to [illegible], the



FEEDING THE POOR.

place where she was born, but where she did not know a single soul.

The big town of Samara, with a population of well over a hundred thousand, is revolutionary through and through. Evidence is more apparent there than elsewhere because the soldiery are disaffected, and the authorities cannot rely upon them. So, comparatively, there is little molestation of the public. Cartoons, which I could not secure in Moscow because they were prohibited, I found exposed for sale in the shop windows.

Still, one was not allowed to forget that these are times of revolution. A newspaper, closed down by the police in Kazan, emerged into life again at Samara. There was but one issue; the Samara police seized the premises. I spent a morning with the editor of the *Samara Courier*, the leading daily paper. During six months he received fifteen separate summonses to appear before the Court for writing things which he ought not to—such as commenting on the soldiers flogging innocent people.

I did not see much actual distress in Samara town. It is a great commercial centre, and has many rich merchants. But not one farthing did they contribute to relieve the appalling distress this late winter in the drought-stricken country districts of the Province. There is a double cause: complete absence of public spirit and dislike to aid those who, under the thumb of the Social Democrats, are teaching the peasants that rich folk are their enemies.

Besides what the Government are doing in a blundering and dilatory way, the United Zemstvo Congress at Moscow got Mr. Nicolai Shishkoff—a most capable man—to undertake the distribution of relief in the most needy parts. The funds at his disposal formed but a spoonful of water to an army perishing from thirst. And always the Government acted toward those distributing semi-private charity as agents politically working against the Government, whereas the only idea was to play the good Samaritan.

With some knowledge of the great food-producing areas of the world, the wheat-belt of Canada, for instance, I found it melancholy journeying through this rich, black-soiled Samara, all barren, bleached sterile with long rainless months, and then soaked when it was too late.

There are nearly fifty million English acres in the Province. Nine hundred land proprietors, called "aristocrats," own four millions of them; twelve hundred of the merchant class own six millions; the Government own the like amount; the Emperor has about three and a quarter millions. Putting aside waste lands, there are 12,000,000 acres to be divided among a population of 2,700,000. The official figures for the autumn of 1906 were that 89 per cent. of the peasants were on the verge of starvation.

At Samara, the Zemstvo officials were good enough to put at my disposal all the information they have, tinted maps and statistics. The figures for the autumn of 1906 were that 89 per cent. of

the peasantry were starving; to feed these for 122 days during the winter would cost 28,000,000 roubles, say £2,800,000. Of the 307 districts, in only two were the crops reported "good" in 1906. There were over 40,000 farms without even seed for 1907—so, however gracious Providence may be in the matter of weather, the land must lie idle.

In this Buzuluk district were 20,000 people without food. I met peasants selling their horses so they might have money to buy black bread. At harvest time nearly 100,000 men came to this district to help in the reaping. There was no need last year for the help of a single man.

Improvident and lazy though the *moudjiks* be, no one can come away from investigating their lives without tears. The only sensation at the end of it all is to feel drenched with despair.

Conceive half a peasant population, even in good years, being ever close to hunger. Half the peasant families in the province have less than four acres from which, in their crude way, to scrape a living. Try to picture a family of five struggling to get a livelihood out of a single acre. The chief food is black bread and potatoes: meat never, tea occasionally. Work is done for the "aristocrats," where there are any. The average wage for a labourer (my figures are official) is 15s. 7d. a month, and the man must feed himself and clothe himself. A woman worker gets 9s. a month. A boy of fifteen can earn 7s. 3d. a month.

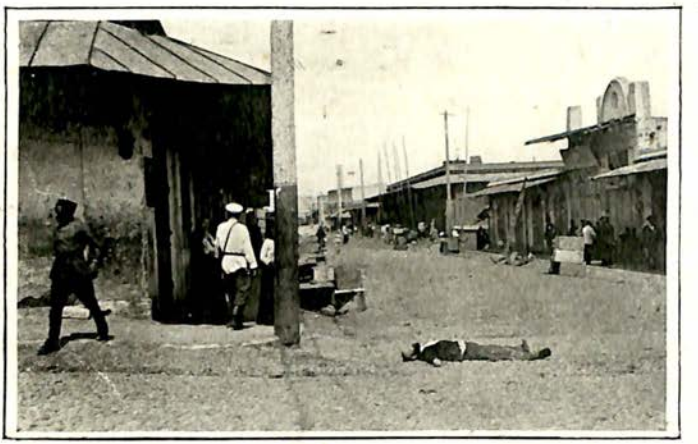
In their dire straits the peasant farmers are putting their land in pawn and borrowing at colossally

extortionate rates. At Bugulma, in the north of the Province, six peasants borrowed £10 from the local priest, and in return gave him the use of six acres for sixteen years. In the district of Buzuluk the peasants were borrowing at from 120 to 240 per cent. The lowest I heard of was 60 per cent. At Nikolaievsk, down south, the average rate of interest was 100.7 per cent. I heard of four cases of 300 per cent., six of 200, sixteen of 120; the lowest was 25 per cent.

These figures tell their tale of readiness to make any sacrifice to secure present money for bread. The security of the money-lender, however, is nil.

It does not cost much to feed a Russian *moudjik*. Three hundred of them can be fed during a month for £50. The Russian Government means to feed them. But there is red tape, there are involved arrangements and sub-divisions and the Lord knows what in the way of pompous ferruled formality. Meanwhile, starvation stalks through Samara.

THE BURNING OF ARMENIAN HOUSES IN BAKU.



A FAMILIAR BAKU SCENE.

CHAPTER XVI.

"BLOODY BAKU."

Petroleum Everywhere—A Hotch-potch Community—A Fight in the Street—Pistols Big and Little—A Drunken Gendarme—Fighting in the Armenian Quarter—Indifference to Human Life—Repairing the Window-panes—The Ways of the Police—An Attack upon the British Vice-Consul: the Official and the Non-official Version—Armenians and Terrorists—The Cossack and the Englishman.

BAKU was an oven. Not a blade of grass nor a drop of fresh drinking water. The sun burnt all colour out of the land. The dun, heaving hills drank in heat and breathed it forth again.

The air was heavy and thick and sickly with the odour of the petroleum wells—ten square miles of drilled rock, tapping the reservoirs of oil, one, two, and three thousand feet below the earth.

Hundreds of grimy erections, like mammoth nightmare candle-snuffers, jostled together. There was constant whirr and crash. Long buckets dropped half a mile down twenty-inch tubes, and returned with dirty petroleum, which was belched into huge tanks. The oil was refined before being pumped six hundred miles to Batoum on the Black Sea, or hauled for long weeks in oil boats up the Volga, smearing the river with petroleum, making the very

fish taste of petroleum. The only drinking water in Baku is a distillation of the brackish Caspian.

You could see the heat waves in the white streets of Baku. In the shade the air was hot and greasy. The tawny Asiatics kept to their home-made coats of sheepskin. Their long, woolly sheepskin hats were like shaggy giant wigs. The Tartars filled the air with fierce cries. Camel caravans slouched along with the sloth of the East. Wealthy Russians in *troikas* raced past with helter-skelter fury. Armenian merchants, sleek and prosperous, hobbled to the bank guarded by soldiers.

Russian soldiers, in sage green cotton jackets, stood in bits of shade at street corners. They lazed by the doors of banks. They sprawled before the shops that were worth raiding. Picturesque Cossacks patrolled the streets.

There was martial law in Baku.

Baku was like a town just rousing itself after being laid prostrate by bombardment. Whole streets were charred ruins. I went into a shop to buy picture-postcards, and I was handed ghastly views of heaps of dead men and women, souvenirs of Tartar and Armenian hatred.

A hotch-potch community was this of sun-baked Baku. Of the two hundred thousand inhabitants, eighty thousand are Tartars, Kurds, Persians, and Lesghians, who are Turkish settlers; there are sixty-five thousand Russians, and among these is included the customary Jewish leavening; there are quite forty thousand Armenians, and the remaining fifteen thousand are of that mixed, nondescript kind you

only find in the far Near East, where East and West do meet and overlap.

All the races in Baku hate one another. The only point of unity is general hatred of the Government. When the young bloods of the revolutionary party have nothing else to do they go out at night and kill gendarmes.

One night I was sitting in my room in the Hôtel de l'Europe, when suddenly, right under my window, was the crack, crack, crick-crack-crackle of revolver shots.

Puff!

Out I put my candles—for nothing draws fire so surely as standing in a lighted window. Then I look, cautiously. Three men retreating are firing wildly at four gendarmes marching as a patrol. The gendarmes retort, crack-crack. The revolutionaries skip to a corner and blaze away.

Ah! One gendarme is down.

People in the street make rushes for hotel doorways, and from the steps crane necks and watch the fighting. Revolver shots ring from all sides. But the streets are clear. Some soldiers appear at the upper end of the street, a hundred yards away, stand under a lamp and fire a volley.

Phut! phut! against the walls, and the crash of glass. Then dead silence.

You know how a swift and drenching downpour will denude a street of pedestrians. Folks are all jammed into doorways. Well, it is like that.

The main way of the street is deserted. The electric lamps splutter.

"It is nodings. Just a leetle vireworks," says a German Jew, who has been elbowing me on the steps, and turns to light a cigar.

Diners go back to the restaurant. I notice two men in the reading-room continue reading their newspapers. Shooting is hourly in Baku, and often unheeded.

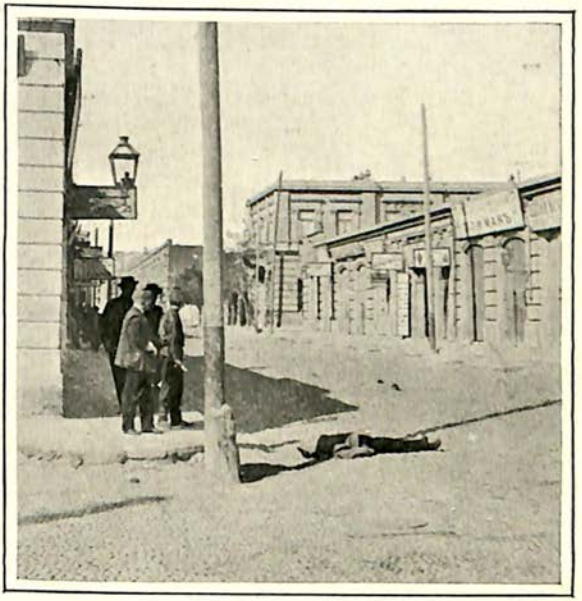
"Have your guns ready," observes a humorist, walking away.

"What do you think of this?" says a big, fleshy Russian, producing from his trouser pocket a long pistol, fifteen inches in length—a brute of a weapon. We laugh.

"That—that's too h-heavy ar-artillery," remarks a man with a stammer. "The kind of re-re-revolver best to-to-to ca-rr-y is li-i-ike this." He feels in his trouser pocket. "Li-i-ike th-this," and he feels in the breast pocket of his jacket. "Hope I haven't lo-ss-ost it! Oh, li-i-ike this," and he fumbles from his waistcoat pocket a baby pistol, not more than three and a half inches long. We laugh louder. "Well, I b-b-bet anyone f-f-fifty roubles it'll ki-ki-kill him at ten pa-paces." None of us take the bet.

Crack! Then crack again!

It is a drunken gendarme reeling along the pavement, conscious it is his duty to fire at somebody. He fires loose. Cursing incoherently he gets in front of the door of the Hôtel de l'Europe. We are beginning to spread when the hall porter walks right up to him, takes the revolver out of his hand, removes the cartridges, hands back the empty revolver, and says, "Now go home!" The drunken



MURDER.

(*Note the Revolver in the Man's Hand.*)

AFTER A MASSACRE

animal argues. What right has a porter to tell a gendarme to go home? Well, he will go home! A droshki comes tearing down the street. He holds up his revolver. There is a lady in the vehicle, and he tells her he'll shoot her if she doesn't get out. She drops out with a scream. "Drive me home, you——!" and there are the usual Russian expletives, whilst the gendarme is click-clicking the ineffective revolver into the back of the affrighted *isvorshik*.

I recall that earlier in the day I had seen two gendarme officers drunk. These are the men intended to keep order.

Soldiers go by the end of the street at a trot. Then silence again.

Three men come sidling down the pavement. They are clad like respectable workmen, are sweating, and are carrying revolvers.

"Get in, please, get in," they say hurriedly, "there will be some firing in a minute." These are the private Armenian police—quite independent of the Russian gendarmes—who are out giving warning. We take it, close the door and wait. Nothing —except plenty of firing in the distance.

A fat man drives up to the hotel. He is quivering with fear. "I've had to drive round. The soldiers are blocking the streets. They are in the Armenian quarter firing volleys."

What it is all about nobody knows. How it started most men have different stories. It was the Terrorists firing at people better dressed than themselves! It was the Social Democrats removing a

few gendarmes! It was the Armenians paying off old scores upon the Tartars! It was the soldiery themselves who had provoked a disturbance to have an excuse for retaliation upon their enemies!

Nothing is so provoking to the ordinary man as to know something really dramatic is going on close at hand and not to see it. It is like the knowledge of a thrilling scene on the stage with the curtain kept down.

So two of us take risks and go forth. We jump into a droshki and are driven into the Armenian quarter. Twice we are held up by the soldiers and chivvied down side streets. At a corner some twenty soldiers volley down the street at right angles.

"This is getting too sultry," I say to my friend; "let us get out of it."

"For God's sake," he answers, "don't turn, and don't run. If we run we are both dead men."

So there is nothing for it but to walk straight up to the soldiers and wish them good-evening, and inquire what the bother is about. The police have been fired upon from a restaurant, the haunt of revolutionaries, and now the soldiers are rounding them up!

We get close. A block of buildings is surrounded, and the soldiers are firing volleys—into the windows and against the walls. Somebody makes a dash—but not for far.

What interests and impresses me is the callousness of everybody.

"Yes," says my friend, "that is so. We've got used to seeing men killed. Life doesn't count here

the same as in England. The first time I saw a man killed I felt sick. Now I hardly take any notice. By the way I'm getting hungry."

"So am I. Why, I've had no dinner." We return to the Hôtel de l'Europe and dine.

I am the only man really curious about the shooting. "Don't bother! We have this sort of thing nearly every night. This is nothing. You ought to have been here during the massacres—thousands dead!"

In the morning I went down to the scene of conflict: Six dead, thirty wounded, and a hundred arrested.

Then I got a headache as a consequence of drinking vile beer in low restaurants, interviewing all sorts and conditions of men, and putting together the story. Hundreds of windows were pierced with rifle balls, and the walls of restaurants were ripped with shot. A few idlers looked on. Most people went about their business with unconcern. They hadn't been killed—and what had they to bother about? A man who got my admiration was a Jewish peddling glazier, with his pack of panes, hobbling into houses seeking work. It's an ill wind, etc.

The official report of the affair is that as a patrol was passing a restaurant a revolver shot was fired into it. What everybody believes is different. The particular quarter where the row took place is well known to be one of the headquarters of revolutionary propaganda. The authorities wanted some excuse to clear several enemies out of the way and to search. So the opening shot was prearranged—just

like the firing on a Russian religious procession when a massacre of the Jews is in contemplation—that the soldiers might set to work. Some basis is afforded for this theory by the fact that—by coincidence, if you will—the place was well surrounded by troops when the first revolver shot went off. Immediately the soldiers poured a volley into the restaurant.

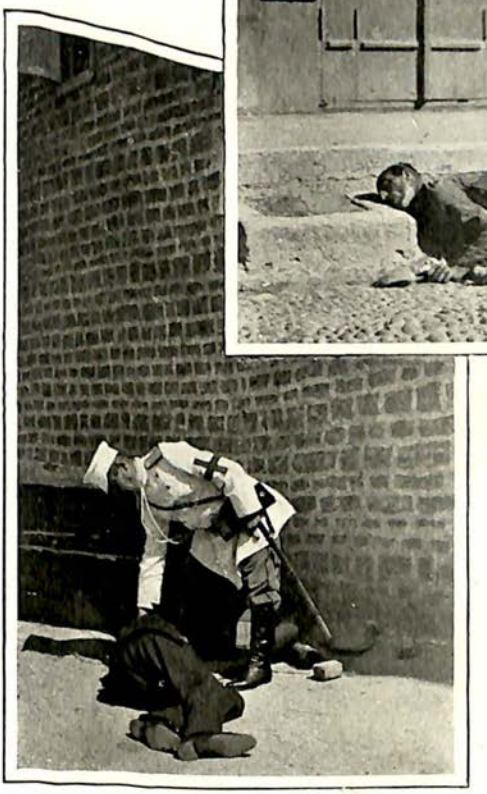
And to hundreds of men in Baku the sound of firing is like the sound of a horn to a huntsman. They must be out, Armenians shooting Tartars, Tartars shooting Armenians, Socialists shooting gendarmes, drunken gendarmes shooting and robbing all and sundry.

There is no law in Baku, though martial law is supposed to prevail. A murder is committed in broad daylight and in the main street, and the murderer walks away. Nobody is arrested. If somebody is, it is usually the wrong man. However, the gendarmes take credit for smartness.

The position of the police is difficult, and it is not improved by most of the gendarmes being the scum of society, because no respectable man will now take the risks. The only men who join the Russian police ranks are ruffians who cannot get jobs at anything else.

Said the late Chief of Police in Baku to a friend of mine: "My salary is £35 a month. On that I have to maintain a certain position and keep a carriage. Like others I might take bribes, and in a few years become a rich man. But I have many enemies, and if I were found out I should be dismissed, a comparatively young man, and my whole

A SLAIN RIOTER.



AID BY THE RED CROSS SOCIETY.

career ruined. On the other hand, to refuse bribes is to do my duty: that is to throw into prison men whom I know to be murderers. The sure consequence would be that some morning I would be shot dead. What am I to do?"

Now the ways of the Baku police are truly Asiatic. A while back, Mr. Urquhart, the British Vice-Consul, was shot at six or seven times at close quarters, the bullets ripping his clothing, and doing little other than scratching him—a miraculous escape. The attack on Mr. Urquhart was not on the Consul as such, but because Mr. Urquhart is the manager of several petroleum companies, and there had been labour disturbances. The ruffians got away. The police reported they captured the man who took the leading part, and that as he tried to escape he was killed. So the British Government could not complain of lack of energy in catching the villain, and as the man was dead—well, the incident was closed. That is the official story, all strictly proper and authenticated by documents.

Now for the unofficial story. The Baku police knew there would be a rumpus in regard to the attack on Mr. Urquhart. To admit they could not catch the would-be assassin was a confession of impotence; to arrest the wrong man and bring him to trial would mean lack of identification by Mr. Urquhart, release of the prisoner, and some scorn of the authorities. So there was arrested one George Stern, a Jew, a noted revolutionary, who had been seen watching Mr. Urquhart. He was taken through the streets by the soldiery. Said they to him

quietly, "We have had money to let you go. Make your escape; we will try to catch you, but will let you get away." In good faith Stern made a bolt. Instantly guns are fired. Stern drops. He is bayonetted and smashed and killed. So a revolutionary is got out of the way without trial; the authorities are sure the man who attempted to kill Mr. Urquhart is dead, but he is so disfigured that identification is impossible. The British Government cannot remonstrate with the Russian Government for not catching the offender!

There are always two versions of an incident in Russia, official and unofficial. Most people believe the unofficial.

Now a vendetta is in progress between Armenians and Tartars, Christians and Moslems. The Armenians are the more intelligent people in this part of the world, and for long have been a whole bush of thorns in the side of the Government. Just to turn their attention from agitation and talk about freedom and constitutional government, the usual means were adopted to stimulate Tartar animosity. Consequently came the famous massacres of 1905 in Baku and other parts of the Caucasus. Armenians were murdered by the thousand. Since then the Armenians have combined—have, indeed, though numerically inferior to the Tartars, become infinitely superior in organisation.

Revenge is sweet, even to the Armenian. Though the Armenians suffered terribly in the massacres because they were unprepared, they have been making the Tartars pay a heavy price. Every Tartar who

took part in the slaughter of the Armenians is a marked man.

Crack! crack! there is the ring of revolver shots in a dark street—a scurrying of dark figures. When the dilatory gendarmes arrive one or two Tartars are found weltering in blood.

The Armenians form the commercial class in Baku. They have most to lose by a democratic, socialistic, anarchist revolution. They want a constitutional government, but they want to secure it by constitutional means. They are no friends of the Terrorists, the bomb-throwers, the shooters of officials in the back. Accordingly they are the enemies of the extreme brigade. They have their own police, independent of the Russian police, and much more effective. They have given the Terrorists notice they do not intend Baku to be made into another Warsaw, and that if they do not stop their tactics—street robberies, the holding up of banks, the rifling of shops—they will clear the lot of them off the face of the earth. And they mean it. The bitterness between the rival revolutionary factions is like vitriol. Pistol shots are the only effective arguments. "Bloody Baku" has the disadvantage of being alliterative; but it is correct.

Still the Terrorists continue their work. They are wealthy as a body because they blackmail. They write to merchants that if so many thousand roubles are not found by a certain date death will be the consequence. So it will; it always is if money is not promptly forthcoming. A receipt is given, and for a time at least, until it is thought well to squeeze

again, the merchant need not worry. So daring are the Terrorists that they will walk into an office and tell the chief their business: a thousand roubles now, and a couple of thousand a week hence—or death!

These Terrorists and the Armenians are in savage conflict. One day the Terrorists ordered a strike in all the shops. They went round the town, telling all the shopkeepers to close, and took down the names of those who refused. Representatives of the Armenian organisation followed behind, told the shopkeepers to keep open, and took the names of those who did not. In any case the poor shopkeepers are going to have bullets put into them.

The official police are quite useless, and stupid. One day a cashier was robbed in the street. On the other side of the street was another cashier guarded by two gendarmes. "Why didn't you protect the man from the thieves?" was asked them. "We had nothing to do with him; our instructions were to look after this man."

When the Cossacks make an arrest the first thing they do is to smash the man's face until the flesh is in ribbons. It is usual for two Cossacks to have a prisoner in a carriage, and a third Cossack busy knocking his face into a pulp whilst the vehicle is being driven through the streets.

The Cossack is no respecter of persons, and there is always the possibility of the peace-loving foreigner coming in for a walloping. A Cossack riding pell-mell down a street, as Cossacks love to do, knocked over a man. "You fool," commented a passing Englishman. The Cossack turned on him and

thrashed him. There was a Consular protest. The Governor offered an official apology, and invited the Englishman to fix the punishment. "Oh," said the disgusted Englishman, "give the lightest punishment you have for a Cossack." "That is that he stand bareheaded for eight hours in the broiling sun."

And the sun shines at Baku with quadruple fierceness.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE REVOLUTION IN THE CAUCASUS.

A State of Anarchy—A Mixture of Races—Armenians and Tartars—Galitzin's Cynical Policy—Armenian Reprisals—The Pan-Islamic Movement—Armenians Steering a Middle Course—The Governor of Batum and the Foreign Consuls—Curious Customs in the Caucasus—The Different Races.

THE whole of the wild region of Trans-Caucasia is under the strictest martial law. I journeyed from Baku, on the Caspian Sea, to Batum, on the Black Sea, and always the trains were under convoy.

The military hold complete power. They systematically go through all the carriages, and cross-examine and search the passengers. At either end of the train are special coaches crowded with soldiers. At every station soldiers line up alongside the train. On sidings I have seen dozens of trains, composed of trucks chiefly, crowded with soldiers, who use the trains as perambulating barracks, and are ready to be moved at short notice to wherever trouble may be specially bad.

In most parts of Russia the conviction was forced upon me that the severe repressive measures of the Government had no other than a provocative effect upon the community. In the Caucasus regions, however, what the Government had done

A WAYSIDE STATION IN THE CAUCASUS.

counted in some measure for success. The revolutionary movement—the agitation to overthrow the Government—had been scotched.

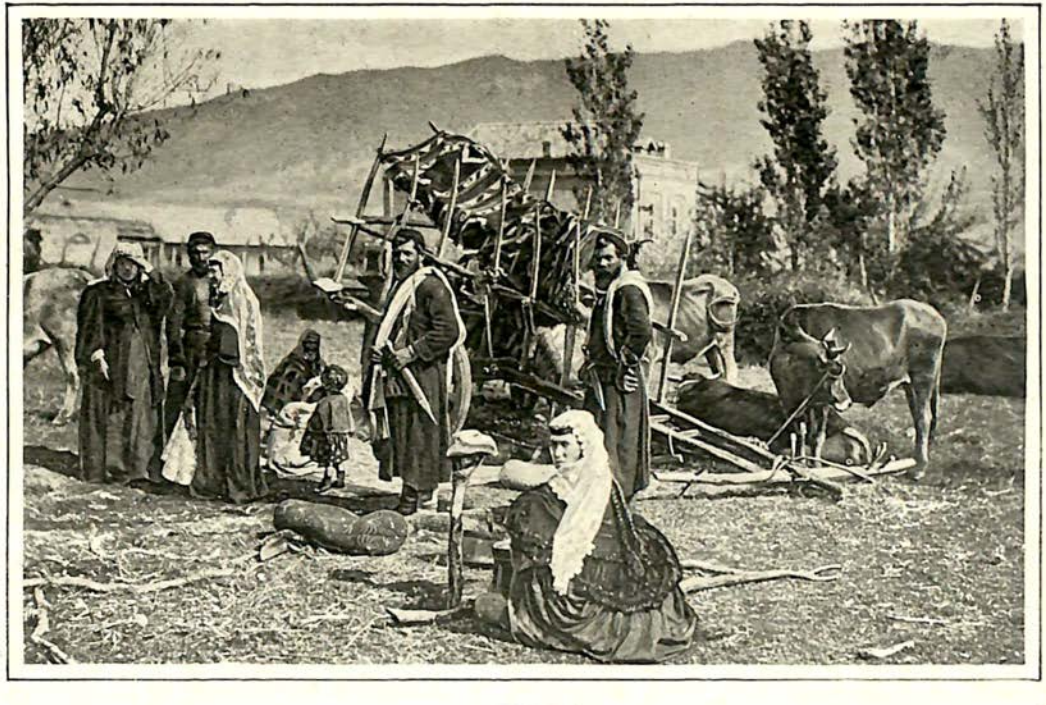
But, having said this, I must add that in regard to the common law nothing less than bloody anarchy prevails. The only party which is dominant in activity is that of the Terrorists, the Anarchists, the cut-throats, who, under the cloak of working for the freedom of Russia, rob and murder right and left. The police are absolutely impotent to hinder them.

Merchants in Tiflis, Batum, and Baku pay blackmail to be saved from bullets. People are held up in the streets and shot for a couple of shillings. When a man goes to the bank to withdraw or deposit money he will have a couple of mounted soldiers riding ahead of him, an armed officer in the carriage with him, and a couple of mounted soldiers in his wake. The manner in which the Terrorists get acquainted with the fact when anybody carries a large sum of money is amazing. It can only be assumed that spies are in all offices. I was dining one night with a merchant whose chief clerk had left the office to deposit money in the bank. Apparently, nobody knew his mission but himself and my acquaintance. Yet in broad daylight, and before he got to the end of the street, he was waylaid and shot, and he subsequently died.

The cases of shops being rifled and people killed are so common as to lack interest. At night the streets are deserted, save for the assassins and the military patrols in constant tramp.

In no part of the Russian Empire is the situation so complex and so interesting as in Trans-Caucasia. It is wheels within wheels, and nationality against nationality. The Russians are the dominant race, but they count least numerically. Out of the ten millions who inhabit this southern end of Russia, between Mount Elbruz and Mount Ararat, only half a million are Muscovite. There are four million Tartars, all Mahommedans, mostly peasants, fanatical and ignorant; the Armenians, intellectual superiors of the peoples south of the Caucasus range, number about two millions; the slothful, pleasure-loving Georgians make up another two millions, whilst the remainder are Turks, Kurds, Persians, and the tribes which inhabit the fastnesses of the hills, varied in race, different in language, and making the Caucasus an ethnological museum.

There are various parties in the Caucasus. There are the Georgians, who want autonomy. There are the Armenians, who are willing to remain under Russia, but desire a constitutional government, under which Armenians shall have precisely the same rights as other Russian subjects. There are the Tartars, who are working to break Trans-Caucasia away from Russia, join it to Turkey, and proclaim the Sultan as the Kaliph. There are the Social Democrats, the strongest in numbers, and including many of the others within their ranks, who are opposed to Government control of any sort, desire a communal republic, the annexation of all private property for the public benefit. There are



GEORGIANS.

the Terrorists, who assassinate and pillage, and generally do the dirty work of the Social Democrats. The interests of these various parties clash. In many districts violent vendetta is the rule. But all sections—the street robbers, and the men who are anxious for the abolition of autocracy and bureaucracy, and for constitutionalism to be obtained by legal means—are included in the broad description, revolutionaries.

Armenians have long been under the suspicion of the Government. For years the Armenian movement in Turkey was engineered from Erivan, the capital of Russian Armenia. With quicker brains, and altogether the mental superiors of their conquerors, the Armenians, placed under many civic disabilities, and generally elbowed from the posts of administrative control, have endeavoured to get their claims recognised. During the ten years Prince Galitzin was Governor-General of the Caucasus they felt a heavy hand was against them. When Prince Galitzin caused the property of the Armenian Church to be seized by the Government, and all Armenian schools to be closed so that the Armenian language might be smothered, the Armenians, who had been working against Turkey, turned their attention against the Russian Government. They made their power felt by acts of outrage perpetrated on Russian officials high and low.

It was then that Galitzin, rather than the Government, hit upon a scheme to distract Armenian attention from revolutionary propaganda. They had to protect themselves from the Tartars.

It is painful to conceive a ruling Power setting two subject races to fight one another. Yet I did not meet a single man in those regions who did not regard it as a mere matter of common knowledge that the awful massacres of Armenians by Tartars in 1905 were directly instigated by the Russians.

The Armenian is not loved by the other races. He has many of the qualities of the Jew. Commercially he has the Georgians under his heel. The financial power of the Armenians has been growing at a phenomenal pace. Ten years before, when last I was in Tiflis, the Armenians were just laying their grip on the city. To-day they practically own Tiflis. The Georgian is lazy; to receive money under a mortgage is the easiest way of raising the wind. So to-day the Georgians amiably submit, and acknowledge without any animus that their neighbour the Armenian is a very clever fellow. The Tartar is by no means so docile. He found himself working for the Armenian; he saw his property passing into Armenian hands; he hated all infidels; in the villages he was a poor peasant; in the towns he was little better than a coolie. Grossly ignorant, nothing was easier than to sow in the Tartar mind the seeds of bitterness towards the grasping Armenians.

Whilst the Armenians were in something like rebellion against the Government for laying hands on their Church property, the Tartars were coddled and patted on the back by the Galitzin administration. All the village police were Tartars. Tartar outrages were ignored; outrages by Armenians were

A CARPET MARKET IN TRANS-CAUCASIA.

savagely punished. Then followed the massacres, thousands of defenceless Armenians slaughtered, Armenian girls kidnapped and carried off to Tartar villages, Armenian houses fired, and Armenian priests thrown into the flames. What is quite clear, and was told me again and again by British eye-witnesses, is that the military stood on one side and grinned whilst the fanatical Tartars had their fill of Armenian blood.

The massacres of 1905 put determination into the Armenian people, who hitherto had obtained no reputation for personal courage. As a nation they had their backs to the wall. They were wealthy, cunning, and, under stress, were brave. There are always means of bringing arms into a country, and there was not and is not an Armenian who is without his rifle, revolver, and plenty of ammunition. The "Dashna Ktsiu Toun" (league of leagues) was formed, and the whole of the Armenian people were combined in a national organisation. One of its objects is revenge. Bands—much like the *komitaji* bands I have seen in Macedonia—are out in the hills, moving stealthily and putting whole Tartar villages to the death. During 1906 the Tartars of Baku were sniped off by the hundred. They are getting a very bloody Roland for their Oliver. The Tartars are just a horde without organisation. In wit against wit with the Tartars the Armenians score every time.

This Tartar-Armenian conflict provides a striking example of Russian weakness and shortsightedness. When it was seen of what the Armenians were

capable, Prince Galitzin was removed, and the Czar restored to the Armenians their church property, allowed the Armenian schools to be re-opened and the Armenian language used. Thus the violent tactics of the Armenians against the Government were brought to an end—for the time being. But in regard to the Tartars, the Government could not have taken any reckoning of the road along which they were travelling.

The Tartars, like all Asiatics, interpreted the patting on the back to which they were subjected as lack of strength on the part of Russia. When they saw how easily they could wipe out the Armenians, the natural thought came how easy it would be to wipe out all Christians. Besides, were not the Russians infidels, and did not the land south of Kasbek rightly belong to the Mahommedans? Accordingly was started in the Caucasus the great pan-Islamic movement, the end of which is not yet.

The Moslem world is divided into two sects, which hate one another with a hatred greater than either bear to the giaour — the Sunnis and the Shiahs. The Turks are Sunnis, and the Persians Shiahs. But the Mahommedans in Russia are of a mixed brand, though they are strongly inclined to Turkey because the Sultan is the Kaliph of their faith.

There was no better place than the Caucasus to begin the pan-Islamic movement destined to bring into cohesion all sections of Mahommedans to war against the aggressive Christians. The real author of the movement was Prince Galitzin—though in

rousing the Tartars he saw no further than utilising them as a weapon to scourge the Armenians. The net result, however, has been to consolidate the Armenians and to stir the fanaticism of all Tartars against all Christians.

I must say the Armenians are showing best in the dire struggle in which the Russian Empire is plunged. Of course, they are revolutionaries every one. Their political ideas are crude, and many of their ambitions are absurd. But now they have wrested back their church property and their national schools, they wish to keep march with the great revolutionary movement in Russia proper, but are desirous of securing their objects by legal and constitutional means. This is sufficient to make them suspect by the authorities. As, however, they are not given to violence against officials, something like an armed truce prevails.

On the other hand, the Armenians are not only engaged in paying off scores by killing Tartars—a quarrel from which the Government now keep aloof—but they are engaged in a running warfare with the extreme revolutionaries, the Social Democrats and the Terrorists. The Armenians are the bankers, the merchants, and the property owners in the Caucasus, and resent being held up and robbed by the terrorists. They lack sympathy with Socialists whose ideas have run riot, who look upon as thieves everybody richer than themselves, preach the criminality of private property, the justification of taking another man's roubles out of his pockets, the shooting of capitalists, the division of posses-

sions, a working day of two hours, and pay four or five times as much as they now get!

One night at a wayside station I witnessed a hullaballoo between a revolutionary and the gendarmes. The man was travelling without a ticket, and he refused to pay, because the railway belonged to the State, the State was really the people, he was one of the people, and he did not see why he should pay money to go into somebody else's pocket! The idea of equality has extended to the Tartar waiters in the hotels. If you call "*Chelavik!*" (man), the equivalent of *garçon*, the waiter will not answer. You must call him "*Officia*" (officiator).

He refuses to wear a white tie or white gloves or a black coat or anything which is a badge of servitude. He wears what he likes. He lacks courtesy, but if a proprietor dismiss one man, all will go on strike. The receiving of a tip is servile. So now ten per cent. is added to the bill. The man is certain of his money, and he shows his equality by treating those on whom he waits with rudeness. It is no good flying into a passion. If you do, a bullet will probably stay your progress on your way home. The only thing is to be philosophic, mutter *Nichevo!* and shrug the shoulders.

The leaders of the Armenians are no parties to the social revolution. Their desires are political. And as they are the people who have most to lose in an upheaval, they, with the far-sightedness of their race, are rather beating time in the revolutionary movement, and so avoiding conflicts with the

A BIT OF CAUCASUS SCENERY.

military. At the same time they are the stern enemies of the robbing-and-killing party.

So party is against party in the Caucasus. The only party in active operation against the Government is the Democrat-cum-Terrorist. It is composed of all the discontented, idle ne'er-do-weels of all the races—Russians, Armenians, Tartars, Turks, Persians, Georgians, a very picturesque and quaintly-garbed horde, as I have seen them in the crooked, fantastic, and semi-Oriental streets of the wonderful old city of Tiflis.

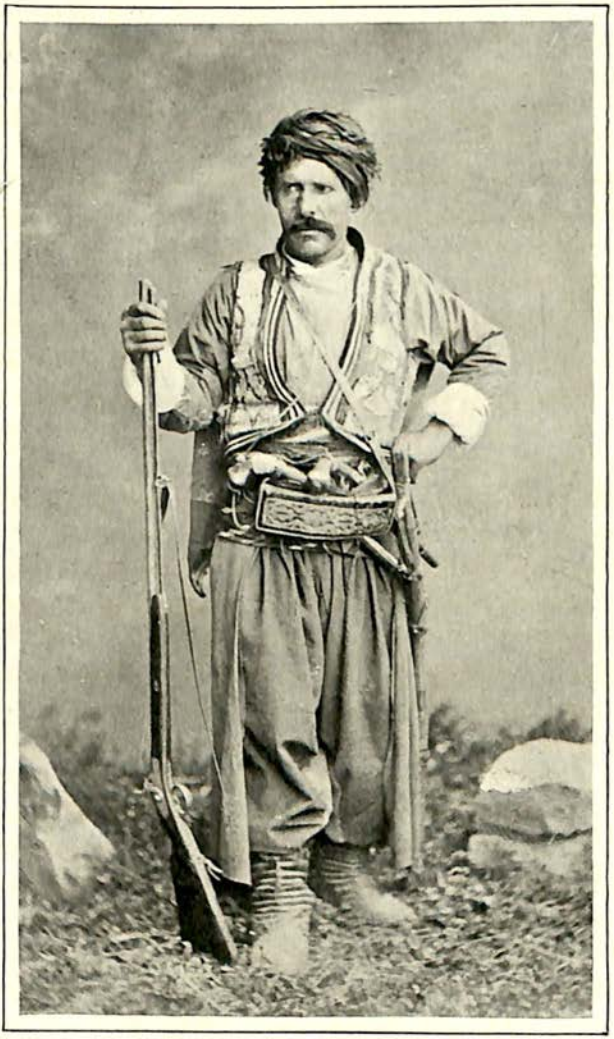
But one had little time to squander on the picturesque, except the troops of mounted Cossacks who, with carbines poised on thigh, patrol Tiflis. Often they are shot at. They reply with a volley down the street, and if the innocent are killed, well, it is the fault of the innocent for being in the way. Occasionally a holder-up is laid by the heels. He is at once drum-headed and is shot at dawn the next morning. Generally speaking, complete anarchy reigns. There is no effective protection, despite the patrols, and comparatively few arrests. It is not so much a question of the people against the Government as race strife and the Terrorists against the community.

The Government, having flooded the country with troops, may be said to hold the upper hand in the Caucasus. This exasperates the extremists. Their next move is an endeavour to embroil Russia with foreign Powers by a wholesale slaughter of the consuls, a dozen, at the important port of Batum. Proof that the Governor of Batum is himself afraid

is provided in the fact that when I was there he called a meeting of all the consuls, told them he had reliable information of what the revolutionaries intended to do, and therefore besought the consuls not to allow themselves to be provoked into a street quarrel whatever might be the insult offered. This confession of impotence came from a governor with over three thousand troops in the town and at his command.

In no part of the world is there such a hotch-potch of nationalities as in the Caucasus. Besides the Russians, Georgians, Armenians, and Persians, there are dozens of distinct tribes, speaking some sixty languages between them. They are mostly to be found on the southern slopes of the mountain range, so that one is forced to the conclusion that in the great migration from the plains of India many of the tribes came this way and were checked by the snowy Caucasus, regarded by the ancients as the end of the world, and there their descendants have remained till this day.

On the northern slopes there are three groups of races, divided into some twenty-seven tribes. The races which inhabit the northern and southern slopes present definite contrasts. Those on the north are somewhat alike in appearance, have similar customs, and have preserved themselves from alien races. On the southern slopes, the scenes of many invasions and bloody conflicts, there have been innumerable crossings. Ethnologically, the history of the north is as of yesterday, whilst that of the south stretches back to before the dawn of our knowledge.



A HILLSMAN IN THE CAUCASUS.

There are people who believe that the Caucasus was the cradle of the human race. Nothing bears that out; indeed, what can be proved goes to show, as I have indicated, the foreign origin of the Caucasus people. The tendency of the ages has been to destroy types and produce amalgam races, and the striking distinctions between the peoples of the Caucasus suggest they are the remnants of great races which have elsewhere disappeared, though there be traces of Semitic, Indo-European, and Mongolian origin.

To probe into the customs of these little-known tribes—who are shy and sometimes resentful to the outer world—is like reading neglected pages in the book of mankind. Many curious customs obtain among the Khewsurs. Thus a wife, when about to have a child, is obliged to leave her home and go and hide herself alone in a hut on the mountains, miles away from her home. The father meantime prowls round the hut, occasionally firing his gun to let his wife know he is there and to encourage her. After the birth of the child both remain for some time in the hut, and food is brought surreptitiously after dark by little girls from the village. They marry late, and the fewness of the children is intentional. It is a great disgrace if a child is born in less than four years after marriage. The marriage ceremony is interesting. The garments of the two are joined together by the priest with a pin, or are even sewn together. The ceremony takes place near a fire in the house of the man's father. The priest gives each a little wax

candle, and places before them the sacred elements, then gives them his blessing. Their religion is an extraordinary mixture of Christianity, Moslemism, and original paganism. The Touches have a curious way of punishing cowardice in combat. The man is obliged to eat out of a dog's trough, and is not allowed to figure beside his compatriots. The Suans look upon strangers with distrust, and neglect all the laws of hospitality. Although once Christians, they have relapsed into very primitive paganism; some practice a kind of cult of the sun and moon.

From the sixth century Circassia seems to have been inhabited by the same race and the same tribes, the Tcherkesses, or Circassians. A curious custom is that of giving a child the name of the first stranger who enters the house after its birth. They have no alphabet. The Tcherkesses are a very brave and noble race, and their system of government is purely feudal. Their nobles have power of life and death over their serfs. Among the nobles marriage by rape is the only recognised form; the husband after marriage may not see his wife in the daytime nor in the presence of witnesses; only at night.

The Kabardians are one of the most noble races of the Caucasus. One of their legends tells of the fights of their ancestors with a tribe of women called Emmetches, inhabiting the country where the Greeks placed the Amazons. According to the legend the Kabardians defeated this tribe and took them to wife. At the time of their power the Kabardians were the envy of all neighbouring

A MAHOMMEDAN CEMETERY.

peoples, but the advent of Islamism ruined their national character. Hospitality is a sovereign virtue with them. The master of the house considers any injury done to his guest as a personal affront which he is bound to avenge.

The Abkhasians are a peaceful tribe. They probably felt the influence of the Greeks. The language of the Abazes, one of the divisions of the Abkhasians, has no affinity with any known tongue in Europe or Asia. The Abkhasians are terrible brigands; at one time they did a large traffic in slaves. The girls wear a curious costume common to all the Tcherkesses. From the age of eleven or twelve they must wear a broad cincture of skin, which compresses the figure and arrests development of the chest. This they must wear until they are married, as the husband alone has the right to detach it with his dagger. This kind of corset, by flattening the chest, causes considerable development in the lower part of the body. This the women of the country consider a beauty.

The Ossetes call themselves Irans and their country Iranistan. Many and very varying conjectures have been made as to their origin. Some think them of Medish origin, others of Jewish, others Arab, and others class them with the Azes who emigrated to Scandinavia with the Odin of the legend. The Ossetes are more European in their ways than any of the other tribes in the Caucasus. Since the Russian conquest they have embraced Christianity, but it is much mixed with paganism. They have an enormous number of legends. Like

the Georgians, they believe the smallpox to be a sacred malady; they give it no treatment of any kind, as they are convinced it is futile. The house visited by smallpox is considered to be visited by the Lord. Their life is purely patriarchal. The Lesghians, divided into a great number of tribes, are spread over the whole of Daghestan. They are generally taken by travellers as the type of the independent Caucasian mountaineer. The Lesghians are Sunnite Moslems, although they drink wine and smoke. Their women are perfect beasts of burden, but they enjoy much respect and influence.

In the second half of the eleventh century hordes of Turks and Turkomans came and settled in Georgia. Later, under Queen Tamara (1180-1206), who is still venerated in the Caucasus as much as the Virgin Mary, the south of the Caucasus as far as the Dnieper was inundated by the Mongol hordes of Jinghiz Khan. In the sixteenth century the invasions of Timour were even more disastrous than the Mongol invasions. From that time forward the ebb and flow of Turkoman hordes modified by degrees the physiognomy of the native populations by the introduction of various Mongol tribes, whose descendants constitute a great part of the inhabitants of South and North Caucasus. The Tartars are a Turkish tribe, probably descendants of the Turkish tribes who occupied the south of Russia before the Mongol Tartar invasion. It is evident, therefore, that the Europeans in ignorance gave the name of Tartar not only to the tribes who came with the Asiatic invasions, but also to Moslem peoples of

Turkish origin who occupied the shores of the Caspian and Black Seas.

The Kalmuks, according to ancient legend, made an expedition to the Caucasus, where they were lost. They pretend they came originally from the country between the Kohon Noor (Blue Lake) and Tibet. But it was not until the beginning of the seventeenth century that the Kalmuks began to establish themselves between the Volga and the Don. Of all the Asiatic tribes settled in the Caucasus they were the only one who for a moment thought of returning to their own country to escape the Russian domination in 1770.*

There are many Russian sects in the Caucasus, such as the Molokanys, or milk-eaters, the Doukhobors, and the Scoptzi. Most of them have been settled there since 1837. The Doukhobors, inhabiting the environs of Elisabetpol and Tiflis, have no books, and their children receive no education. The Scoptzi or "maimed" are a very numerous sect, and are to be found in many of the large towns of Russia, where they often carry on the profession of goldsmiths. In the Caucasus they live in isolated groups, and seem not to have made any proselytes. In the Government of Orel there are whole villages of them; here, as an exception, they marry, but never have more than one child, after which they submit to the practices of their deplorable superstition.

* Though I gathered much information about the tribes it is right I should acknowledge my indebtedness to the work, "*Recherches Anthropologiques dans le Caucase*," by Ernest Chantre.

Russia, during the century and more it has held the Caucasus, has never succeeded in subjugating the tribes. The Muscovite rule is morosely accepted, but Russification of the region in religion, language, and nationality has been stubbornly resisted. Russia's safeguard is the antipathy of the different races to each other, and the Government, as I have shown, play one off against the other. Indeed, one section of the same people is played off against the other, as, for instance, when there is a growing spirit for constitutional autonomy, the Constitutionalists and the Socialists are set by the ears, cleavage created between the upper classes and the peasantry.

But though things are bad in the Caucasus, they would be infinitely worse if Trans-Caucasia broke away from the Empire and endeavoured to govern itself as an autonomous state.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LITTLE STORIES FROM CZAR-LAND.

Censoring—What the Suppression of a Newspaper means—The Official Organ of the Terrorists—The "Duplicator" a Forbidden Instrument—A Trap set for an English Resident in Moscow—Three True Stories about Espionage—Tiflis, the Capital of the Caucasus—The Author shadowed—Futility of the Passport System.

THERE reached me in Russia an English newspaper in which there should have been an article by myself.

I fancy it was in the paper; but if so it was buried. The journal had been put into mourning, for two solid columns consisted of nothing but black smudges, completely obliterating what was beneath. I think it was the offspring of my pen.

That is the work of the censor—the gentleman in Russia who acts as doctor to the minds of the people, and decides what they shall and what they shall not mentally eat. What good this censoring does is not clear. I am sure that not more than one in every hundred thousand Russians can read English—indeed, there are eighty million Muscovites who cannot even read their own language. Of the very few who can read English, what a tiny proportion were likely to receive papers with articles by myself! The very fact they know English is

some proof they belong to the educated, and not to the *moudjik* class; and to the educated there are a hundred ways in which the censor is fooled and people get to see what they desire.

Man, being born of woman, is curious. An article which would pass unheeded if openly printed becomes a matter of importance when it cannot be read. Isn't it Maeterlinck who says that the most interesting thing is what is taking place on the other side of a wall? So the most interesting thing in a newspaper is always that which you are hindered from reading.

Correspondence enters Russia by various doors, and there are various censors. What one man will obliterate another man will pass. So what you are prevented reading in Petersburg you may find untouched in Odessa.

I have heard of an English lady, consumed with curiosity concerning a smudged-out picture in her favourite illustrated periodical. At last, after much trouble, she was able to see the prohibited picture—an advertisement representing the Czar in ecstasies of delight on being presented with a box of Thingamy's pills.

In Russia all newspapers have to be submitted to the local censor, that he may prohibit them if there be anything which offends his political taste. Fancy an English editor being obliged to run round the town at two o'clock in the morning to hunt up in a *café chantant* some semi-intoxicated underling whose duty it is to edit the editorials!

As a matter of fact, the editors in Russia do not

wait for official sanction. If they did publication would frequently be half a day late. They take their chances and print. The usual punishment is that the journal is officially suppressed.

But, bless your soul, that does not mean the public are deprived of their newspapers. Another newspaper appears the next morning, identical in everything except the title. A journal more frank than cautious has to change its name about once every fortnight. You may read of the *Witness* being suppressed; a week later it is reported that the *Eye of the People* has been prohibited; after that the *Sentinel* is crushed. Innocent creature; you believe all the papers in Russia are being stopped. Not a bit of it. They come out just the same with different names.

Occasionally the authorities seize the newspaper office, break up everything, and send the editor to Siberia. Then half the members of the literary staff start small papers of their own. Russia teems with newspapers. Besides, a prohibited sheet is sure of a tremendous sale.

I have lying before me the official newspaper of the Terrorists, in which things are printed which would make the hair of the average English reader crisp. The names are published of officials who are to be "removed"—usually by a revolver shot in the back. Nobody knows where that sheet is printed. The authorities are at their wits' ends. Yet 30,000 are sold every day.

* * * * *

The "duplicator," an instrument to strike off

two or three hundred copies of a typewritten manuscript, the like of which is to be found in innumerable offices at home, is forbidden in Russia.

The obvious reason is that it is much more secret than the printing press can be for the multiplication of revolutionary documents.

Still, I have a friend in Moscow, a journalist and an Englishman, who owns one, and, as he disperses articles to all parts of the world, uses it in his profession. If he has any British politics I fancy they are Tory. Anyway, he is no enemy to law and order, though he is by no means enthusiastic over the existing government in Russia.

The style of residence in Moscow is chiefly on the flat system.

Well, one afternoon there was a ring at the door. The Russian maid answered it. There stood a grey-cloaked student. Was the *gospodin* in? No, he wasn't. Well, was madame in? Yes. Could he see her?

Folks are very chary of admitting strangers beyond the threshold in Russia. There are too many cases of "hold up" at the revolver point. So instead of allowing him to enter, the maid called her mistress.

The student put his hand to his breast. Madame thought he was about to produce a revolver. But he only produced a typewritten sheet. He besought that he might be allowed to enter and make a dozen copies on the duplicator.

"But I don't know who you are," said madame.

"Oh, I am a friend of your husband's. I know

he sympathises with our cause. If he were here I am sure he would let me copy—just a dozen copies. Oh, if you knew how important it is to me that I should have copies you would let me. My life is in danger; won't you do something to save me? I know your husband would let me." He was apparently in great distress.

"You are quite wrong," said madame, "if you think we would do anything against the Czar. We are foreigners, the guests of the Czar. How can you ask us to abuse hospitality by allowing you to use our house to print revolutionary literature?"

"Oh, I don't ask you as a revolutionary. I plead to you as a man. My life is at stake. Lady, just a dozen copies. I am a friend of your husband, and I know he would allow me."

But madame was obdurate, though the young fellow pleaded for over half an hour. He went away disconsolate.

She was glad to get rid of him. Curiosity, however, led her on to the balcony to see where the student went.

Conceive her amazement when down on the boulevard she saw a dozen soldiers, under the charge of an officer. They were guarding the main door to the flats.

Exit the student, but wearing a black cloak instead of a grey coat this time. He went up to the officer. There was a long conversation. Then they all went away.

The whole thing had been a trap. The secret police knew the Englishman had the duplicator.

They wanted to find out if it was used for the dissemination of revolutionary literature. They waited a convenient time when my friend was out of the way, and when madame was likely to be alone. Had she yielded both she and her husband would have been given twenty-four hours' notice to get beyond the frontier.

That is a story told me by the lady herself whilst I was taking tea in her house.

* * * * *

For three weeks I was conscious of being spied upon—how much longer I cannot say. I knew my man, and I studiously ignored him. His disguises were various, but thin. Now and then I thought I had given him the slip; so I believe I did. But a foreigner is easy to follow in Russia—the passport system and constant police surveillance provide for that—and certainly I was never allowed to get out of sight for more than thirty-six hours.

It was on the night train between Moscow and Nijni-Novgorod on the Volga that we first exchanged glances. I was having one of those little disputes with the conductor in regard to my sleeping accommodation which get in the way of all travellers. My Russian is vile, and occasionally, for my own satisfaction and relief, I burst into English. The spy was in the corridor, and in an instant I saw he understood English—just a sudden flash upon the countenance which indicated he knew perfectly well what I was saying. He was a stoutish, heavy-jowled, close-cropped, scissor-moustached man, and looked like a German commercial traveller.

Casually I noticed him at the same hotel the next morning, and that evening he supped two tables away from me when I took a midnight meal in a *café chantant*. So far I regarded him as casual. The next day I became aware he was following me. I set a spy upon him. He had been to the steamship office inquiring for where I had booked. So!

Then the fun commenced—the only bit of real fun I experienced in traversing the blood-stained and unhappy land of Russia. I fooled him to the top of his bent. In the towns he generally put somebody else to watch me, to allay suspicion no doubt. At Buzuluk, the foul little town in Samara Province where I stayed at the foulest of hotels, I surprised a policeman sleeping outside my bedroom door.

On one occasion he was an infantry captain; on another a schoolmaster, on another engaged in the telegraph service. Every other man in Russia is in uniform, and you can tell the rank of everybody you meet from a schoolboy to a Governor-General on the retired list. That is if you know what that colour means and those straps, and can make a guess at the width of the stripes down the side of the trousers. The higher the rank the wider the stripe. If you look at a general sideways you can hardly see his trousers for stripe.

What on earth could be the benefit of spying upon a stray foreigner like myself the secret police of Russia alone know. My baggage was ransacked by someone at Astrakhan, though the landlord was positive no one had been in the room since I left it. I have a way of arranging my things in Russia that

I can tell at once if any other fingers have been about.

Having a peep into the belongings of British subjects is a mania among Russian officials, though frequently they are rewarded with nothing more valuable than dirty collars and old newspapers. Here, however, are three true stories:—

1. An Englishman was carrying despatches to the British Minister at Teheran, in Persia. He had with him two dress-suit cases, both alike. When he was obliged to leave his first-class carriage on the Russian railway he chained the bags together, and then chained them to the hat-rack. Down in the Caucasus region he returned to his carriage from the station buffet. One of the bags had been sliced open with a knife, and the usual old collars scattered in the carriage. The wrong bag had been attacked, and the Englishman had returned just in time to prevent the second bag being cut. So the despatches were saved, and Russia did not become acquainted with what was in that bag. As a matter of fact, it was a new cypher for diplomatic correspondence.

2. Other countries besides Russia desire secret information. There is a military man who spends a good deal of his life wandering about the Continent as an easy-going tourist—at the expense of the British taxpayer. He holidays chiefly in the neighbourhood of fortresses, and can spot hidden batteries as quickly as any man in Europe.

Well, a certain country—I had better not name it—desired copies of plans of particular changes in a particular Russian fortress. There are always

underground agents at work in the diplomatic world, and stealthily, circuitously, and by corruption most countries know the defensive secrets of their neighbours. It was arranged, on the usual bribery terms, for the plans to be revealed. A foreigner was to travel to Sevastopol. On a certain day and at a certain hour he was to sit in front of a particular café. At the same table was to sit a Russian. They were to exchange a few commonplaces, and the Russian was politely to offer the foreigner a cigarette. They were to part. That was all.

The scheme worked strictly to arrangement. The foreigner did not light the cigarette. He trifled with it, and somehow it disappeared into his pocket. In it, on the thinnest of tracing paper, were the secret plans. So far, good. The foreigner—the usual meek-eyed tourist—went to his hotel, opened his bag, removed his clothing, and put the cigarette at the bottom, returned the clothing, locked the bag, and went for a stroll—to carry out his duties as tourist, for every stranger is watched at Sevastopol—before getting back to Petersburg by a roundabout way.

That night, to be doubly sure, he took a peep into his bag. The cigarette had gone! His room was just as he had left it; the bag had been locked, the clothing was apparently as he had placed it. But there was no cigarette. Of course, the people at the hotel were quite sure not a soul had been in the room. But the foreigner knew the ways of the secret police. He could not complain—what had he to complain about to the authorities? He could only

pass a sleepless night racked with chagrin. The next day, as he was taking train to Petersburg—it was no good going round about, for it was clear he was known, had been followed, and that the traitor had been spied upon—an official approached, saluted, smiled, and remarked, "Bon voyage, monsieur!"

3. There was a reception at the residence of one of the ministers in Petersburg. A certain Englishman attended. In the ante-room he deposited his overcoat, and carelessly he had left in the pocket a package containing some two thousand roubles (say £200). As he was driving home, he suddenly remembered the money, and stuck a hand in his pocket. No money! It was clear a thief had been at work. On reaching his house he wrote a note to the Minister, politely explaining what had taken place, and asking that some inquiries might be made. There were the customary regrets that such a discreditable thing had occurred. The police were set to work. The Englishman was closely questioned as to the various values of the rouble notes, how they were wrapped, the precise kind of paper, the exact kind of string with which the package was tied.

Two days later an officer of police called upon the Englishman and gave him the package. He was delighted. But who had stolen it; where was it found? The officer would not say; monsieur must be content with the recovery of his property. So he was—very content, indeed! A few days later, putting on the same overcoat, he was aware of some package which had slipped down the lining. It was

extracted. A twin package—identical with that which he thought he had lost, and which, lost or not, had certainly been restored to him. But if this was the original package which had slipped through a rent in the pocket, what about the package containing the two thousand roubles given him by the police?

The explanation was that the Minister, upset at the thought an Englishman had been robbed in his house, and knowing that if he offered to refund the money it would be refused, had given the roubles to the police with instructions they should be returned as though the package had been recovered.

Now the gentleman who did me the honour of following me probably earned his salary by writing exciting but fictitious accounts of what I was doing. A Russian spy, like an American journalist, is supposed to be lax if he has not something dramatic constantly to tell.

Tiflis, the capital of the Caucasus, is a most picturesque town, and all sorts of pretty, fantastic, Oriental, and nasty-smelling things give it an individuality of its own. Also, it is seething with revolution. Though Cossacks canter through the streets and shoot folks indiscriminately, the revolutionaries discriminate and kill those who are to be "removed." Everybody spies on everybody else.

I was in the restaurant of my hotel, talking with an Armenian about the ways of the Government, when quickly he stopped speaking, raised his eyebrows, and glanced to an adjoining table, where there came a man to have lunch. I took the hint

—he was a spy—and we talked about the scenery, the excellence of Caucasus wine, and what would cure me of a touch of malaria with which I was afflicted.

For a whole day I saw nothing of my pet spy. The next evening, however, when, by the funicular railway, I ascended the mount which overlooks Tiflis, and which gives a panoramic view of the Caucasus mountains, he appeared and sat by the table where I was sipping Russian tea. At last he spoke to me, remarking in Russian that the scenery was very fine.

"Yes, it is," I replied in English; "but why do you speak to me in Russian? You know English quite well, don't you?"

He shrugged his shoulders, coloured slightly, grinned, and *ne panymi'd* (didn't understand).

"Excuse me," I said, "you know perfectly well what I say. I hope you've had a pleasant trip. You've been dodging me about for the last two months, ever since I left Moscow. If your police think I'm a dangerous person who ought to be chivvied out of the country, you had better begin."

Again he shrugged his shoulders, and said he didn't know what I was talking about.

"Oh, quite well," I persisted. "I'm not complaining, for I know your occupation is recognised in this country. Now, why didn't you introduce yourself to me at the start. I am quite certain you would make an excellent interpreter. Have a cigarette?"

He looked at me out of the corner of his eye. He took a cigarette. "Thank you," he said in

ERIVAN AND MOUNT ARARAT

capital English. He puffed quietly for a minute, and then said, in English again, "And the scenery is very beautiful, isn't it?"

"Very beautiful," said I. "When do you return to Moscow?" He shrugged his shoulders again. "My route," I added, "is from here to Batum; then I go to Sevastopol, afterwards to Odessa, Kiev, and Moscow. Perhaps that will save you trouble."

"Thank you," said he. He raised his hat politely, and sauntered away. I have not seen him since. But I often look over my shoulder for his successor.

* * * * *

Russia has great faith in its passport system. Everybody must have a passport, and it must be presented to the police immediately on arrival in a town. Wherever I went I had not been two minutes in my room at an hotel before there was a tap at the door, and the porter, accompanied by a gendarme, was inquiring for my passport, which is carefully examined, though, being in English, it cannot be read.

The passport which a Russian carries bears the name of his father, his birthplace and age, his religion, and not infrequently a personal description, colour of hair, hue of eyes, and the rest. It costs a workman over eight shillings a year for his passport, but a titled Russian gets his for nothing. Frequently the ignorant peasant loses his passport in travelling. He is arrested until inquiries are made.

The only use of the passport system is to worry respectable people. Criminals and revolutionaries are always provided with false passports. At Riga

the manufacture of false passports is quite a business. So when the police are looking for one man and carefully scrutinising all passports so they may arrest him, he frequently passes under their very noses with a false document. The passports are much used to assist Siberian convicts to escape. If suspicion is aroused it is generally in the mind of an ill-paid gendarme, and a couple of roubles smoothes the way.

People openly boast of the way in which they cheat the authorities in regard to passports. As much personal satisfaction is taken in that as an average Englishman takes in telling his exploits in smuggling a box of cigars.

I met a man in the train, a Jew, who carried both Armenian and British passports. It is not unusual for Jews to pay a visit to the United States, stay there just a sufficient length of time to qualify as citizens of that great Republic, and then, hardly knowing a word of English, return to Russia and snap their fingers at the authorities by claiming the protection of Uncle Sam, and wearing in their buttonholes miniature representations of the Stars and Stripes.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RUSSIAN WORKING MAN.

Economic Effects of Political Turmoil—Price of Labour—Dismissal of Foreign Workmen—Foreign Capital invested in Russian Industries—Absence of Skilled Workmen—Lack of Business Aptitude among Russians—Father Gapon—*Artels*—Corruption and Comradeship.

THE prevalent unrest is having the most disastrous effect on commerce. Foreign firms will only supply for cash. As there is a shortage of money, Russians only purchase for immediate needs. Improvements and enlargements are at a standstill, for a manufacturer shrinks from spending a hundred thousand roubles when there is the possibility his place will be razed to the ground the week after next. The impression I got from conversation with Englishmen engaged in business was that they would gladly clear out if it did not mean the dropping of much capital.

The price of labour has enormously increased. Until the troubles came, Odessa was undoubtedly the cheapest port in Europe. That the dock hands were underpaid is notorious. But when their minds became inflamed they bounced to the other extreme, so that to-day the coalheavers and trimmers get five roubles a day, which is equal in spending power to a guinea. The consequence is they will not work

the week through. The workmen are fond of vodki, and devote about two days a week to bestial drunkenness. More than once I have seen half a dozen lying in an intoxicated heap in a droshki whilst bawling the prohibited "Marseillaise."

Their trade union leaders have instilled into the working classes that not only are they the equals but the superiors of the foreign working man. So they have succeeded in compelling the employers to dismiss many English and German workmen. These importations received good pay because they were smart men at their trades. The Russian workman demands the same pay, not for the same work, but for the same time spent over the work. But he is a dawdler; he comes late; he talks a lot; he has rests to drink tea or guzzle vodki. Indeed, it takes a Russian about five times as long to do a thing as an Englishman, and then he does it badly. The trade unionists insist on appointing their own foremen, and deciding what fresh workmen shall be taken on, and they oppose an employer dismissing a man without their sanction. No wonder manufacturers complain that the situation is intolerable.

The grand idea among the workers is that all factories must be run on communistic lines. Quite recently a file works, in which a Sheffield firm was interested, had to close down because the demands of labour were such that there was no profit. The works are for sale. The man who holds the attorney to sell was approached by the workmen, who offered a ridiculous price for the plant. "But where would you get the money?" "Oh, we shall raise it some-

MOSCOW WORKMEN.

how." "But who will advance it?" "We don't know, but we will be sure to get it somehow." "I tell you where you will get it," said the man; "you will get it from the Jew. You are always grumbling at the Jew exploiting you, and yet here you will be letting the Jew exploit you." "That is true," was the answer, with a scratch of the head; "that is true; we never thought of it."

One-fifth of the capital invested in Russian industries comes from abroad. Indeed, it is reckoned that £20,000,000 a year is spent by way of interest on industrial investments. Many industries are subsidised by the State, which means increased taxation; foreign competition is resisted by heavy tariffs; the spending power of the people is not great enough to consume all home products; the quality of the goods is not such as to compete abroad; many of the dividends are provided by drawing on reserves.

Now such a thing as a skilled workman is a rare thing to find in Russia. Workers in factories are men driven into the towns because they cannot get a living on the land, and they go back to the land as soon as they see a chance. Again, many townsmen make for the country in harvest time, and only return as winter approaches. The result is there can be no steady supply of labour, and wages fluctuate considerably.

The fact that Russian trade is in other hands than those of Russians is the best demonstration of the lack of business aptitude amongst the people. Even when you are told they are Russians you find

they are men from the Baltic Provinces, Finns, Poles, Armenians. The Baltic Province men are the best; they speak German; German is the commercial language of Russia. In the great cotton mills the heads are Englishmen or Scots. They receive big salaries compared with what they would receive at home. The educated Russian recognises the superiority of the foreigner. The ignorant Russian sees in the employment of the foreigner some deep-laid Government scheme to keep the people downtrodden. You can no more show a Russian workman he is inferior than you can prove to a man whom you know to be a fool that he is a fool. Such recognition is beyond their mental range.

The corruption in the Government which is so vigorously denounced by the workmen is in full force amongst themselves. Foremen blackmail those under them or threaten them with dismissal—all wrong, but a procedure to be followed by the blackmailed workmen when they get the opportunity. There is an absence of the moral sense, quite as marked in those who denounce corruption as in those who are known to practice it. I recall making the casual acquaintance of a man in a train. He denounced Ministers for misappropriation, and yet took credit to himself for smartness that in the placing of orders for his firm he himself received commissions from the firms with whom he placed them. He refused to see any parallel.

The crookedness of the Muscovite mind cannot be better displayed than in the way the Government utilised the notorious Father Gapon, who, under the

guise of being a leader of the people, was really a Government tool, a man of immoral life, who met the well-deserved fate of the breed to which he belonged. When the truth began to be known, Gapon endeavoured to make out he had been utilising the police. However, it was proved he had been for years in the pay of the secret police, and the betrayed workers had him shot dead. The whole scheme under the plot between the Government and Gapon was to distract the attention of working men from politics and to fix it on economic improvement. It is possible enough that at the start Gapon thought he was doing a good work—what better than improving the conditions of labour?—but being a man of personality, great vanity, and loose living, he drew his reward for swaying the mob away from politics in money provided by the Government, and he received his punishment in assassination.

One of the most interesting features in industrial Russia is the system of *artels*—bands of workmen labouring on a co-operative plan and wandering the country searching for employment. They have a chief, *starosta;* he makes a contract in the name of the group for, maybe, months of work, receives the pay, distributes to each man his share, but keeps to himself a certain commission. *Artels* vary from little bands of itinerants to large associations rather on the pattern of English trade unions.

This system of doing work on a semi-communist plan has been in vogue in Russia since the twelfth century. The combinations do something to keep up wages, and each man belonging to an *artel*

shares, if he is not working, with those who do, just as he has to share when he works and his neighbour does not. Further, a certain percentage goes to a joint capital, useful for buying tools, travelling expenses, and food when journeys are to be made to secure work. A member of an *artel* can leave when he chooses, or he can be dismissed from membership. When a man leaves he gets his share of the capital, but if he is dismissed he receives half, or, if his offence has been serious, nothing.

There are plenty of little centres of manufacture in agricultural districts. There exists a dread of local manufacture being killed by the larger factories in the great cities. As these large factories are often dependent on labour drawn from rural districts, the peasants, agriculturists in summer and factory hands in winter, have in many places banded themselves together into *artels*, and the folks of the little commune wear and use the articles made in their districts rather than purchase from the great traders.

So amongst the workers of Russia you find corruption and comradeship. You love the simplicity of their character until you find there is petty misappropriation, and your indignation has hardly grown to its full warmth before you find instances of sacrifice and privation for the common weal. It is a difficult country to understand.

CHAPTER XX.

BLACK SEA PICTURES.

The *Potemkin* under a New Name—The Sunken *Bug*—Sevastopol under Arms—A Warning to the British Vice-Consul—The *Czarovitch George* in the Hands of Pirates—On Board a Cargo Boat—Time-expired Soldiers—Men who thrive on a Diet of Black Bread—Gaghri—How Things are done in Russia—Novorosinsk: Russia in Earnest—Setting up a Commune—How it tumbled down—The Bournemouth of Russia.

As I wrote, aboard ship, in the harbour of Sevastopol, with a fringe of forts around, and rows of mammoth, grey-painted cannon, just sticking their noses over the earthworks to sniff danger from the sea, there was a considerable flare of trumpets.

The Black Sea fleet, all that practically remains of Russia's navy, was within a throw of the much-quoted ship's biscuit. There were six men-o'-war, heavy, sinister, green-painted, throwing forth much smoke, which, in the absence of wind, spread and sprawled, hung over the most fortified town in the world like a crape pall. The torpedo nets were out; the long-snouted gun pieces were uncovered, and where the sun caught them gave the dull glint of scraped lead. There were men in the fo'c'sles waving red flags. Then other trumpets blared.

A little to the back, as though in disgrace, and

freshly fired, hiccuping the blackest smoke, was the *Panteleimon*. It is likely that if you look through a list of Russia's warships you will find no reference to the *Panteleimon*. But all the world knows of the *Potemkin*, the ship which mutinied, sailed the Black Sea with the red flag of revolution at the mast-head, and bombarded Odessa. This ship was the *Potemkin* rechristened.

In the fair-way was a hulking pontoon, with feeble cranes tugging ineffectively—for all in the world like fishing lines caught in snags. An endeavour was being made to bring to the surface the *Bug*, which you pronounce rather like "book," and not as disposed at the first moment. When Sevastopol began to reel with rebellion, and the forts and ships barked with cannon at one another, the authorities pulled a plug and sank the *Bug*. She was laden with the deadliest explosives, intended for mining, and if a shell had got into her every warship would have been maimed. The *Bug* was well sunk in the mud at many fathoms' depth, and refused to shift.

On the low-lying dun hills, beyond the tiered earthworks, stood great, gaunt buildings, barracks, with twenty thousand troops in occupation. In the many-eyed fortress, where the windows were small and meshed with iron, were ten thousand prisoners, soldiers and sailors who, under the sharp judgment of the drum-head, had been found enemies of their lord the Czar.

From the harbour came the clang of innumerable hammers in the repairing yards. A row of obsolete

torpedo boats lay on stocks, heaved over on their sides. Live torpedo boats lurched toward the harbour mouth. Impudent pinnaces, always shrieking, curved from point to point. On the fortress, on the docks, on the hills moved patrols of soldiery.

Sevastopol was in full preparation for war.

The enemy were Russians, sailors. The troops were well in hand. For months the officers had lived in closer touch with their men. The Russian Tommy in Sevastopol likes his officer, who takes a fatherly interest in him. When rebellion breaks out the twenty thousand soldiers in the arsenal port may be relied upon.

But a different story was told concerning the tars. My information came from Russians who knew. The authorities were in nothing less than a funk concerning the possibility of mutiny. The commanders were trying to work discontent out of the crews by keeping them constantly busy. The crews scowled, had black looks, and did their duty with sullenness.

Despite watch, the reddest of revolutionary pamphlets were read in the mess. The men sneered at their officers, gave salutes grudgingly, and were out of hand. The officers shut their eyes to many things. They felt that if they began punishing offenders, the ships would mutiny, they themselves would be murdered, and the warships run the gauntlet of the forts while escaping to sea.

One afternoon I went forth to visit Mr. Erskine, the British Vice-Consul. As usual, the streets were patrolled by troops. Most of the police have been

killed off by the Terrorists, and there was no rush to secure their jobs. Sevastopol being a purely arsenal town, the population is nearly all military and naval. There is practically no commerce, and Mr. Erskine's duties may be said to be mainly political. He had four British subjects to look after; but the arrival of a circus in a few days would raise the number to five because the clown was an Englishman.

The Consulate was up a lane—maybe it is British modesty which settles British Consulates in most parts of the world in corners very difficult for the stranger-Briton to find. A ring at the bell and a tat-tat, and a manservant's head peeped from an adjoining window. In days of robbery and shootings, even Consulates cannot be too careful. An innocent visitor! So the chain was taken off the sneck.

A cheery, laughing man was Mr. Erskine, who removed his revolver from the lid of his cigarette-box to offer the usual hospitality in Russia. He did not know what was going to happen, but he waited events.

The Governor, General Skrydloff, called Mr. Erskine to him, and gravely informed him the authorities had fears that the extreme revolutionaries really intended to attempt the assassination of Consuls, so there might be the intervention of foreign Powers. "Well, the Consulate had better be guarded by soldiers," said the Consul.

"Very sorry," replied the Governor, "but no soldiers can be spared."

"Then there had better be some special police put there," suggested the Consul.

"Very sorry," said the Governor, "there are so few police they cannot be spared."

So the British Consul, having been officially informed he was in danger of assassination, was given no protection whatever in a town where there are twenty thousand troops. "My only wish," said Mr. Erskine, with a smile, "is that the Russian Government will be compelled to provide very handsomely for my heirs."

I had come round to Sevastopol from Batum in the Caucasus in a cargo steamer, which made an arc of the eastern end of the Black Sea. Ill-luck prevented me from travelling by the *Czarevitch George*, which we saluted half-a-dozen hours before she ran into adventure at Sukum. There came on board five-and-twenty deck passengers. When a mile or two out at sea the captain and officers found revolvers at their heads. Everybody in Russia carries a revolver—though it is strictly forbidden—and some of the other passengers wanted to open fire on the pirates. If they did, then the captain and officers were to be killed at once. Discretion, as usual, became the better part of valour. The post was robbed of £1,600, and about £30 of ship's money was taken. The passengers were not touched. A boat was lowered, and the pirates, taking the captain with them, so they could not be fired upon from the ship, were pulled to the coast, and disappeared into the woods. It was an interesting half-hour, and I could have bitten off my thumb that I missed it.

There was a mixed brigade by the boat in which I travelled, Russian officials of all grades and many uniforms; Jew merchants and Armenian dealers; Cossacks in the fantastic garb of their race, coned sheepskin hats, long pleated coats, with silver-tipped cartridge cases across their breasts, twenty-inch and most villainous daggers dangling from silver-studded belts; Caucasian students on their way to the University at Odessa; big, bony, bull-faced *moudjiks* in red shirts, moving elsewhere for work; peak-eyed and scrappy-whiskered Tartars sitting on their heels eyeing the world quizzically, and playing with their beads.

When the ship, fore, aft, hold, and deck, was packed with cargo, human and other, seven hundred time-expired soldiers were marched on board at Batum. They were all young fellows who had served their four years under conscription, and were now moving home to Northern Russia, and to regions beyond the Volga. They were noisy and mirthful, and given to song, and some were rather drunk. When they became rampageous on the dock side an officer addressed them: "Men, I have had no trouble with you for four years. Don't let me have any now that you are just going away." The men stopped their horse-play.

For two days, until we got to Novorosinsk, the ship was like a pig pen. Every inch of the deck was packed with soldiers, a good many in constant drowse. They had no sleeping accommodation nor blankets—nothing but their heavy, felt-like field-coats. They wrapped themselves in these, and in

a tangled mass lay across one another—a wistful scene at night: the huddled men all silent; the vessel splashing and surging; the only light the moon hanging in a sky which was like purple velvet.

The soldiers had nothing to eat but black bread, no meat and no tea, though from the bum-boats which came alongside those with money bought grapes, excellent, at twopence a pound. Still, though his fare is meagre, the Russian soldier is healthily bronzed, and looks particularly well fed. When his passions are not roused he is the best natured, most easy-going, hobbledehoy fellow in the world.

I never saw a happier lot than those seven hundred men, military service finished, on the way back to their villages. They had concertinas among them, and to these they sang. I talked to the men about their soldiering. They knew how to march and how to hold a gun. But they had received no practice in shooting. Many had not fired a single cartridge during the four years.

A pretty spot is Gaghri, though I doubt a little if you find it on the ordinary map. It rests in the curve of an arm of land, and faces south. The hills are beautiful and wooded, and through the defiles are seen the snowy and jagged ridges of the Caucasus range. There are finely-built hotels, a finely-furnished bathing house on the sea-edge, laid out gardens. But the place is deserted.

Gaghri provides an instance of how things are done in Russia. Two or three years ago one of the

Grand Dukes came yachting in these parts. He was struck with the charm of the situation. He saw what a nice thing it would be to have a fashionable watering-place on this side of the Black Sea to be in time a rival to Yalta in the Crimea. Also, as he bought ground, he saw a means of enriching himself. Next to the Emperor, the wish of a Grand Duke is a thing to be obeyed. Six million roubles of public money were spent in hotel-building, road-making, and laying out of gardens.

When it was all finished the climate was discovered to be unhealthy. There are constant rains, and the whole country reeks with malaria. Invalids attracted to this new health resort fled in a much worse state than they came. There is no railway accommodation, no harbour, and as the sea is often rough, and ships dare not attempt to anchor, there is no knowing, when you land at Gaghri, when you are going to get away again.

Each summer the hotels are opened, the waiters come, the band plays. Half a million of roubles out of the public chest are spent each year keeping Gaghri on its legs. If there are ten visitors in Gaghri at a time it has reached its maximum. And all because of a Grand Duke's fancy, the lack of proper investigation, and someone to inform the Grand Duke that it is occasionally within the scope of the mighty to be in error.

Russia in earnest is seen at Novorosinsk, a new town, with a railway and a harbour as its parents. It lies just where the Caucasus Mountains—which for hundreds of miles have fallen from rearing snow-

crusted crags, dividing the world in twain, to gentle uplands—slide into the Black Sea. With no guardian hills the wind bites hard from the Cossack regions. There are no trees and no verdure. It is a stark land. But here comes the straggling railway, which wanders along the north side of the Caucasus, and trails from nor'east, tapping the country to the very banks of the Volga. The wheat-fields of the Volga valley give their surplus to this railway, which brings it down to Novorosinsk, where the sea is touched and the road found to the outer world. Only the Volga valley had no surplus to give in 1906. It had not produced enough to feed the people of Samara, or Saratov, or the Don Cossacks.

The town is an evidence of what Russia can do in a spurt of good intent. With the building of the railway came the construction of a fine sea wall. The harbour is deep, and there is no tide. There is a huge grain elevator, with endless belts and shoots to deliver right into the hold of a ship. Many millions have been spent.

Novorosinsk is raw, but it is the rawness of a western American port which is still grappling with its fate, and intends to be a boss port before long. The simile, however, does not last. No cars, groaning with grain, come rumbling over the parched plain. There is no hum of machinery in the fine elevator. Rank and seedy weeds grow in the well-marked railway yards. The long, black piers are deserted. There is easy room for a hundred ocean-going vessels. I saw two.

The wind gathers the sand from the steppes, and

brings it, a dun, gritty cloud, swirling over the town. It rasps your throat, and mucks your eyes. Through it, at a gallop, comes a Cossack patrol, real Cossacks —not the spick and showy gentlemen you occasionally meet on the Nevski in Petersburg—grimy men in tattered grey cloaks, mounted on hardy but ill-fed nags, with accoutrements, harness, and the rest of the dingiest. They ride in a close bunch, the hoofs of their beasts beating in four inches of hot dust. For the pain of Russia's internal trouble is even here.

To Novorosinsk have been attracted thousands of men of daring. They took matters into their own hands—backed by a regiment of Cossacks who killed their officers—seized the Governor and all officials, and put them into prison. A commune was started. The grain elevator: it was theirs, and the profits were for them. Hadn't somebody said that if every man worked two hours a day nobody need work for more?—they would show the working men of the world the thing in practice. What right had private companies to own ships, making money out of the working man, the origin of all wealth?—they would work two hours a day and insist on being paid four times as much as they had received for an eight hours' day. That would bring the hated capitalists to their senses. As for administration, nothing easier: after two hours' work in the morning the men would meet at noon in general meeting and decide what should be done.

Crude economics! Yes, but not an unfair sample of what has got into the minds of the eighty millions

of the Czar's subjects who can neither read nor write.

It was not the Russian warships outside the harbour which gave the quietus to the Republic of Novorosinsk. It tumbled to pieces from causes which had never been contemplated. Trains did not come to the town laden with goods which were to be seized for the general benefit of Novorosinsk. Ship owners were so unsympathetic that they stopped their vessels going there to be unloaded in order that labourers might be paid 10s. for two hours' work, and the goods—in the sacred name of public property—be distributed without any payment at all. The Republic, having lasted for twelve weeks, was starved into submission.

The men of Novorosinsk were sure there was trickery to bring them back to the old conditions. So it was all right to kill and rob those better dressed than themselves. They were hard pressed because trade was bad. That was ascribed to the drought which withered the green wheat-shoots. I got talking to a man who said it would have been all right if the Emperor had not abolished the Duma!

Yalta—the Bournemouth of Russia—little queen of the Crimea, was in tears. It has not changed a little bit since I spent happy days there ten years before—except that then it was all smiles of sunshine. Now it was all tears of rain. Perhaps it was because the Emperor had not been to his palace of Livadia for some years—railway travelling is so dangerous to the mighty in Russia. Perhaps it was because there was so little money to be made out

of grapes—the hillsides were robed with vineyards—due to competition. Perhaps it was because that even to this sylvan land—as bedizened as a fairy dell in a pantomime, where life should be all song and wine—the monster of class hatred had stretched a claw.

The peach crop in the autumn of 1906 was bounteous. The peasants wanted more pay for gathering. It was pointed out to them that because of the good crop, selling prices would be low, and gathering prices could not be increased. That was too complicated. They refused to pick the peaches. So they all rotted. The peasants received no pay, and the public got no peaches.

CHAPTER XXI.

LEAVES FROM A NOTE-BOOK.

The Highway to Siberia—Cossacks—A Crowded Train—In a Village—Baiting a *Strajnik*—On the Volga—Mongol Conscripts—A Talk with one of them—Attitude of the People towards the Soldiers—On the Caspian Sea—Caging a Brace of "Politicals"—Sympathetic Passengers.

THE electric light in the great station of Samara spurts vividly, crackles to dimness, and then radiates and glows as though the whole earth would be made effulgent. It is just as though the searchlight were turned on a corner of a battlefield where the fighting had been fierce and the dead lie in piles.

Hundreds of *moudjiks*, their wives, their children, all their belongings, crowd the platform. Bundles have been pitched in heaps, and there they themselves have fallen and dropped to sleep in awkward attitudes—savage men, bearded, and animal of visage, and clad in sheepskins, with sheepskin caps and thonged sheepskin about their legs; women with moony, vacant, characterless faces, save for the resignation of their class; children with pinched features dead asleep, and unheeding the jangle of trains, and the hubbub of travellers who must pick a way over this field of the slain.

This is the highway to Siberia, the junction for

barbarous Tashkent. When the *moudjik* travels he does not bother about time-tables. Besides, wiser than he are bothered with Russian time-tables, for whereas every town has its own time, the railways all the Empire over keep Petersburg time, so that at Samara a train timed to leave at 11 o'clock at night is really intended to leave at 1 o'clock in the morning. And no Russian complains if it does not get away till 2.30. So there is advantage in possessing the Oriental unconcern for punctuality.

Rolling about, singing and drunken, are Cossack soldiers. They are in the grimiest of uniforms; their top boots are grey with usage. The men are dirty and unshaven. As they heave forward, their arms round one another's necks, kissing one another with vodki-odoured lips, chewing one another's beards in the customary manner of Muscovite affection born of intoxication, they tread on the *moudjiks*, who grunt and turn on them the eyes of cattle—wondering why they are treated so, but making no complaint. Degradation and brutality mark the scene.

There is a train going through the night toward the wild trans-Caspian Provinces. Most of the carriages are fourth class—wooden trucks, filthy, foul smelling—and each car is lit with a single candle. The *moudjiks* waken, and seize their belongings. There is wild disorder and uproar as they fight for places in the train. Men struggling in the dark to reach the lifeboats and escape a sinking ship must fight like that.

Cossacks are going down the line. In eastern

Samara province there is famine following the drought. People starving are likely to cry for bread. They must be stopped from such seditious conduct by the terrorism of Cossacks.

The soldiers drink vodki, and sing, and kiss one another, and chew beards—their heads drooping, their eyes bleared—until there sounds the second bell for the departure of the train. Then they make a rush for the train; they lurch forward in the last stages of intoxication. A slobber-mouthed beast tries to clamber into my car. He has not the strength, and I have no intention to give him a helping hand. He falls back with a thud. He turns over on his side and curses. There, alongside the metals, he falls asleep. The conductor comes along and kicks him. He heeds not. The conductor kicks him again. Onlookers laugh.

There is no room on the train for these Cossacks —and to attach extra coaches to meet emergencies would upset the entire Russian Empire: anyway, it is never done without special sanction from Petersburg. That would take at least six hours.

The Cossacks press into the cars.

"Out of it!" and they seize the poor, cattle-like peasants, and pitch them to the doorway. A protest is met with a whack from a Cossack whip, which has a piece of lead in the sting of it. A family is escaping, but a leering brute catches a girl and would have her remain. In the candle light I can see her face ashen as she shrinks and shrieks. The man laughs hoarsely, sinks to the floor and sleeps.

For four hours in the black night I watch the hell drama as the train, with rhythmic sog-sog-sog, trundles slowly over the metals. My senses get accustomed to the thick, nauseous, rancid smell of perspiring unwashed people, foul clothing, sheepskins, and soldiers reeking with vodki.

At a wayside station I dismount. There is chillness in the air. The sky is velvety and the moon is slipping to the horizon. It is three o'clock in the bleak morning as I start driving a roadless way over the sad and eternal steppes of famine-stricken Russia.

I don't think about the famine. I think of what purpose the Russian Government can have in sending a horde of debased and drunken Cossacks amongst the starving peasantry, and of the awful tragedies which must follow.

* * * * *

Two days later I am in a village far removed from the railway. It is a woebegone, bankrupt, wallowing place. The inn is disgusting. But though the glass given me be foggy with filth, though the table is sticky with unwashedness, the bedroom—ugh!—well, everything is to match—there is one evidence of western civilisation, a gramophone.

Peasants sprawl their arms on the table, lower their heads, and guzzle tea—too lazy to raise the glass. They insist on the gramophone, and that it play the "Marseillaise," the adopted air of the Russian revolutionaries, and therefore, as we have seen, sternly prohibited in Russia.

THE BANKS OF THE VOLGA.

I wonder what tune would be played by the regimental bands if the President of the French Republic visited the Czar?

Enter a *strajnik*—one of the rural police, created to deal with country disturbances. He comes from a distant part, is badly paid, raggedly dressed in a left-off uniform, and has a sword by his side. He is a hobble-de-hoy fellow, with sandy face and sandy whiskers, a scowl and a get-out-of-my-way walk. He has been planted here to see the *moudjiks* behave themselves, and to knout them if they don't.

He is worse than useless. He is by himself, and if he started to terrorise the peasantry, which is his duty, they, with the courage of numbers, would arrange for his body to be found stark and dead on the steppes. He is cold-shouldered. It is a crime amongst the peasants, punishable with house-burning, to house a *strajnik;* to give him food is to be placed under suspicion—the giver is in the pay of the Government.

"You'd like to hear that again," says a stalwart fellow, with a tawny beard and in a blue shirt.

The *strajnik* scowls.

"The 'Marseillaise' again," someone commands.

The handle is wound, and the French anthem, throaty in tone, screeched out with a rasp as though a nail had got in the works.

The *strajnik* widens his feet, sticks his hands into his pockets, and produces the inevitable *paperos* (cigarette).

"You know that air is forbidden," he grunts, with the same breath that he blows out the first mouthful of smoke.

"Then why don't you stop it?" asks a little broad-shouldered man, with hair all awry. "Why don't you thrash it for revolutionary talk? Why don't you arrest it, and send it to Siberia?"

"You wouldn't talk like that if a troop of Cossacks were here," says the representative of authority.

The remark nettles the slothful *moudjiks*. A glisk of enmity comes into their eyes, like that of whipped brutes, snarling but afraid to bite.

"The Cossacks; that is your only answer; always the Cossacks," sneers the short heavy man with the tousled head. Then, swiftly, "Why are you against the people; why do you side with the Government?"

"The Government pay me!"

"Hear him; the Government pay him," sniggers an old fellow with no teeth and with two wisps of long grey hair trailing from beneath his skin cap and down the side of his pouched yellow cheeks. "Ho! the Government pay him. And who pays the Government? I pay the Government—I find the money to buy that sword to thrash me with."

He chuckles at the thought as an uncommonly good clincher. As he lowers his chin to sip tea he eyes the policeman with merriment. The others chortle at the senile and ragged humourist, whose garments are rent patches.

"I wear the Government's uniform, and I do

the work for the Government," says the *strajnik*, half blustering and half apologetically.

"And when those trousers drop off you, will you be on the side of the people, eh?" asks the best-fed man in the dingy room.

The policeman gives no reply, but busies himself with lighting another *paperos*. He scowls darkly. But the *moudjiks* have him at their mercy. They ask him where he stole his horse; was it true he had become a *strajnik* to avoid being sent to prison for stealing melons from an old woman?

He tries to answer back. He is one amongst eight. In the talk they rise and surround him. The chaff turns to savage abuse, and all jabber and shriek at the top of their voices.

The scene, in a muddy, starving hamlet east of the Volga, is an epitome of what happens all over the realm of the Czar.

"Drink 'To the Devil with the Government'" bawls the little man, who is lame, but hobbles to the table, spills tea into a glass, and forces it into the hand of the *strajnik*. "Drink!"

For an instant we are on the edge of tragedy. Then, like a rip of a paper bag, the laughter breaks loose. They have been having fun with the affrighted *strajnik*. His sandy face is very yellow.

So, with black hunger in the land, oppression and terrorism everywhere, the poor *moudjiks* turn aside hatred with a laugh.

* * * * *

In the prow of the boat, flat-bottomed and

slow-going, sliding down the greasy Volga, is a man plumbing with a pole.

"*Tabak!*" he shouts, and after another plunge he again cries "*Tabak!*" Then it is "*Vor-seem*" (eight feet); then "*Tabak!*" once more.

"*Tabak*" is no recognised measure except among the watermen of the Volga. The shout means that the water is deep enough to wet the tobacco in their breast pocket—if they took measure in person of the depth.

In the stern of the boat, squatting, huddling their knees, is a bunch of soldiers. Their uniform is Russian—but that is the only thing Russian about them. They speak a hurried click-clack tongue, which is like trying the lock of a door. They sing, not the fervid, rollicking songs to be heard in the barracks at Petersburg or Moscow, but strains plaintive, pathetic, long-drawn and nasal, with lingering shakes as though hugging the note—an exotic note which recalls to me days in the lustrous Orient.

If your acquaintance with the East is casual, you might mutter "Japanese"—there are the same ugly faces, coffee complexions, buttonhole eyes.

These are Tartars, Cossacks, Kalmuks, Kirghees—part of the twenty million Mahommedans of whom Nicholas II. is Czar. They have been doing their conscript service as soldiers. Two years and more ago they were dragged from their fishing villages on the flat shores of the Caspian Sea, from leading camel caravans from Khiva and Tashkent, from their nomadic life on the steppes with tents pitched where

KALMUK TENTS.

INTERIOR OF A KALMUK TENT.

feeding for the cattle was best. From the easy commune of the tribe they had gone straight to the severity of Russian military life.

Now it is over. The term of soldier servitude is behind them. To-morrow morning we shall be in Astrakhan, the torrid, sand-swept city stuck away from all the main routes on the world's surface. And they are happy. They sing.

The night is balmy and heavy with heat, and sultriness seems to pierce the dark. Yet the heavens are spangled with points of light, for the stars come nearer the earth here than in far-away England. The moon is a mere slip, a peeling, a rind of itself, and the thin crescent looks to be falling into the waste of sand-dunes which composes the territory of Astrakhan.

I sit and listen to the droning song of these Mongol soldier lads, a shrill, cadenced hum breaking into a trembling, beseeching wail—a love song to a gazelle-eyed Tartar miss, with lips taking colour from the pomegranate.

And between the bearded Russian, driving his pole into the slimy water, and the beardless, sallow Tartars, humming in the stern, are passengers, Russians, business people, a colony of peasants and their progeny, moving to where work is reported plentiful.

They must not speak to the man who so often calls "*Tabak!*"

They will not speak to the soldiers. For a change has come over the Russian people.

There are Russian officers in the main saloon,

much uniformed, and dangling from their button-holes by an orange-streaked ribbon is the Maltese Cross, which tells of service against the Japanese. They are courteous gentlemen, very quiet in conversation, and they sip tea. A year or two back the Russian officer was cock-of-the-walk: noisy, bullying, calling for champagne, forcing his attention on women. He represented the Czar; he was an autocrat; he could do as he liked. Now——phew!

"And you are glad soldiering is over?" I say, in sudden parenthesis, during the singing of the home-going soldiers.

"*Gospodin*," says an olive-faced youth, "I shall make a bonfire of my uniform when I get home. Ah, to be back with my people, out on the steppes, among the tents, tending the cattle, with no bugle, no orders, no barracks——ah!" and he draws a long breath like one sniffing air for which he has long pined.

"You don't like soldiering, eh?"

"It was not the regulations that were hard, but the way the people treated us. It is not our fault that we are soldiers or that we wear this uniform. But people shunned us as though we had a disease; nobody even had a kind word for us. The way the people looked at us—just as though we were dogs. The people thought we were their enemies. We were not. We are just as much Russians as they are. We want liberty. Now we are going back to our tribes, and we will make bonfires of our uniforms."

The moon pales sickly. The sur-surge of the

vessel ploughing through the oily water is punctuated with the shouted record of the man sounding the depth. Shrill and thin, and in the tongue of their mothers, the Tartars are singing—for they are going back to their herds.

* * * * *

This is Sunday night, and Russia's great lake, the Caspian Sea, has been brawlsome all day.

We are a strange crew huddled on the decks: Christians of various brands, Jews some, sun worshippers, too, various sects of Mahommedans.

A sloe-eyed Jewess has been captivating a staff-captain who is on his way to Khiva. Several Persian ladies have been squatting on the after-deck and keeping their faces veiled from lewd male glances.

Last evening we lay at Petrovsk to take on a cargo of sugar for Persia. In Petrovsk, owing to the bounty system, sugar is 18 kopeks a pound (about 4½d.). In Persia the same sugar is 6 kopeks a pound (about 1½d.). So the sugar is taken to Persia, is smuggled back into Russia, and in Caucasian regions you can get plenty of it at 12 kopeks a pound.

During the trundling of crunching and groaning sugar barrels there is the rhythmic tramp of soldiers' feet. On the ill-lit pier can be seen five soldiers, with bayonets fixed, having in custody two middle-aged men, stunt-whiskered, wearing prison shirts and trousers, but owning neither caps nor shoes.

Politicals!—banished to a far trans-Caspian province for life.

They are being taken by sea, shipped on board in the dark. They attract less attention and public sympathy than if conveyed by train. They are less likely to escape.

The people are butt-ended back, whilst the exiles are brought on board the *Grand Duke Alexis*.

The third-class section of the boat is a dark cabin, with wooden shelves. Into one corner are the prisoners put, and then caged in with netting, much as is used in England to restrict the depredations of fowls.

There the men are kept. They cannot stand up; they cannot even sit up. They must keep in recumbent positions in their pens. They are haggard, desperate looking men. As I look at them in their cages my mind jumps away to the Zoological Gardens, in Regent's Park. One of the men speaks German and some French besides his native Russian —a fairly educated man.

Revolutionaries, of course, of the advanced socialistic order! Private property is a sin; so they headed a gang which appropriated somebody else's private land to their own private use. Such an adventure into the realm of Socialism would have meant a mild encounter with the police in England, and a good deal of public amusement. In Russia it meant troops and—here were the leaders exiled to beyond the Caspian for life, to live or starve as the fates ordained. Anyway, it is good-bye to Russia for ever.

Two soldiers, with fixed bayonets, keep watch outside the cages. When I pushed my head into

the den last night I was promised a touch of steel if I didn't move out at once. The difficulty was overcome in the usual way. You can do a lot with a rouble in Russia, and I had leave to take up my abode in the darksome hole if I preferred—which I did not.

Till they reach their unknown destination on the other side of the Caspian the Government is feeding the "politicals"—allowing each twelve ounces of black bread a day; that, and nothing more.

But they have fared much better. Dried fish, slabs of water melon, chunks of cheese, bunches of cigarettes have been heaped upon them. It is kind of the sympathetic peasantry, but painfully like throwing buns to the animals at the Zoo. The men lie in their cages, and smile and nod their thanks.

A man and a woman go through the ship, making a collection to buy the prisoners tea and sugar. No one is too poor to find at least a couple of kopeks. Sometimes it is half a rouble. Only one person refuses, a big flabby woman in the first class, who bursts into vixenish abuse of all sympathisers with the blackguards who ought to be shot.

Pity, though, that the Russian Government lets its prisoners be fed on cadged victuals!

Twenty yards from where I scribble, the caged "politicals" are lying in the dark. Nearer, in the saloon, the bejewelled Jewess is warbling to the staff-captain, who is slightly drunk and sentimental.

In the buffet adjoining my cabin several Russians are guzzling *pevo* (beer), and telling smoking-room stories.

And the *Grand Duke Alexis* is rolling and groaning and fighting a way down the dark and troubled Caspian Sea.

CHAPTER XXII.

FINLAND AS A NATION.

Russifying Finland—Assassination of General Bobrikoff—A Nation on Strike—The Czar's Surrender—A Democratic Constitution—Popular Misconceptions of Finland—Finns and Swedes—Peasant Proprietorship—The Red Guard—On the Verge of Civil War—A Republic?

In the land of the Finns—leading nowhere in particular save to the North Pole—is being evolved an interesting study in constitutionalism.

On the island-studded shores of Finland the wash of the world's mighty events has been beating. For a hundred years this region, half melancholy forest and half mournful lake, was under the tutelage of its big neighbour Russia, and the Czar was saluted as Grand-Duke.

But when things were going darkly with Britain in South Africa, and England had other concerns than the ways of Russia, there came from St. Petersburg a stern, relentless man, Governor-General Bobrikoff. He proceeded to Russianise Finland. Finnish soldiers were sent to the far corners of the Muscovite Empire; Russian soldiers flooded Finland; newspapers which dared criticism of the Government of the Czar were suppressed; Finns who protested found themselves *en route* for Siberia;

others disappeared to foreign lands. No house was free from the prospect of a sudden visit by gendarmes; desks were smashed, furniture was ripped in the search for incriminating documents.

Things in turn went black with Russia. There was humiliation before Japan on the plains of Manchuria; there was rebellion among Russian troops within the Empire; the great, ugly, slothful, proletariat of Russia began to stretch and heave.

Russia's distress was Finland's opportunity. There was sinister whispering of a great uprising. With Russian workers snarling, with Russian troops revolting, with Finland in rebellion, and Poland surely following suit, what further humiliation would fall to Russia? Three bullets fired by a young Finn dripped the life out of Bobrikoff, and a fourth shot closed the life of the Finn.

All Finland went on strike in 1905. It was a nation on strike—unique in history. No Finn official worked; all government ceased. No bank opened its doors. No ship left Helsingfors, no ship entered the harbour; no train ran; no telephone tinkled; no shop was opened; no policeman was on the streets; no lamps were lit; no man went to his employment. Employers and employed were at one. Even the sale of drink ceased. The richer young men formed themselves into a White Guard, and the workers themselves into a Red Guard, and the two guards joined forces and saw there was no hooligan conduct.

That strike by the two and a half million inhabitants of Finland was a solemn intimation to

the Czar that they were not to be treated as Russians, that they were determined to have a constitution, with Finland governed according to Finnish ideas. At the end of a week a steamer puffed into Helsingfors Harbour. A general handed to the people the manifesto of the Czar yielding their demands. Through the funk of Russia, Finland—poor, neglected little country—stepped into the line of countries governed by democracy on constitutional lines.

The dotting and crossing of all "i's" and "t's" in the mutual agreement of Russian Emperor and Finnish people was not concluded till May, 1906. Then the Constitution bore the Imperial signature.

Away with old forms and methods. Finland is to have not only manhood, but woman suffrage. Every man and woman in the country, having reached the age of twenty-four years, is entitled to vote in the selection of two hundred members to sit as a single Chamber to be called the Diet of the Grand Duchy of Finland. The elections are to be triennial. Each session will last ninety days, and each member of the Diet will receive £56 a session for his services.

As much of the Finnish population is of immediate Swedish descent, both the Finnish and Swedish languages will be used. If five-sixths of the members approve a Bill it will become law immediately it obtains the approval of the Emperor Grand-Duke. It cannot possibly become law unless two-thirds of the members approve, and even then, if the remaining one-third object, it cannot become law until

after the succeeding general election, when a bare majority will suffice for sending it forward to the Emperor Grand-Duke. The minority is to have no reason to complain. There are to be equal electoral districts, with a reorganisation every ten years. Each elector is to have the right of voting for a maximum of three candidates. The candidate receiving first place receives equal to one vote, the approval of the second candidate counts for only half a vote, whilst the third has only the third of a vote. Thus "the sacred rights of minorities" are guarded.

Yet Finland is not happy. Indeed, Finland is very unhappy. Something has been swallowed which does not agree with her. She has the colic, and is beginning to writhe with the pain. Or, if I may give a sudden twist to the simile, she is a Frankenstein who has created the monster which threatens to be her undoing.

And here a little sweeping of popular ignorance is necessary. Finland is usually associated with Esquimaux and sledges, and furs and bears. Finland really is a country of gentle undulations swathed chiefly in pine forest, and broken by hundreds of miles of wide lakes and rushing rivers. The winter lasts for seven months, and then the land and water are clasped in frost. But the short three months of summer are delicious; the woods are radiant with flowers, and the stillness of the lakes is disturbed by innumerable fish, mainly salmon. And Finland is go-ahead. There is hardly a lake where little steamers are not to be seen. Down the rapids come

floating endless processions of jaunty logs journeying hundreds of miles. The song of countless saw-mills is heard in many a pretty lake corner.

I spent several days near Jyvaskyla, in the very centre of Finland, and, minus the towering mountains, the surroundings were like those I have seen in the timber regions of British Columbia. The big-boned Finns were own brothers to the saw-mill hands in Western Canada. The trains crawling through the land had timber as their cargo. The telephone was everywhere. I lay in bed in a second-rate inn and rang up a man two hundred miles away. I bade good-bye to friends, and on reaching a lake steamer telephoned from the steamer itself a second good-night, and in the morning, a hundred miles off, when the steamer had bumped against a little pier in an apparent wilderness, a switch connection was made and another chat took place.

And there is plenty of "life." Helsingfors is a "miniature Paris." Life is gay—but it is as a flicker to a search-light compared with the jollity of winter. The open-air restaurants, the three or four theatres, the two bands playing at either end of the main street each afternoon and evening, the yachting in the bay, all are inducement to forget that the place is Finland. I seek pardon for this tourist description. But the description is useful if it clears erroneous impressions, and shows that the inhabitants of Finland are not just blubber-loving sluggards of the far North.

I have purposely used the phrase "inhabitants of Finland," rather than Finns. And here sails

into sight the first cloud to mar the political horizon of Finland, which should be serene.

Before Russia laid a heavy hand on Finland one hundred years ago, Finland had for four hundred years been under the dominance of Sweden. The Finns were little removed from barbarians till the Swedes came along. The Swedes brought culture and a literature. And though the Finns show intellectual and artistic qualities, the nurturing influence has been Sweden. To-day Swedish is the language of the towns and educated classes, whilst Finnish is to be heard among the peasants in the backwoods.

Finland, however, has been touched by the fever which is afflicting all small peoples—the desire to assert independence of nationality. Accordingly, there is a growing party who want to elbow, not only the Swedish language, but also the Swedes themselves out of the country. There are Finns who can, but will not, talk Swedish. There is no rupture, but rather a chilliness between the Finns and the Swedish-Finns. A campaign is promulgated to have Finnish alone spoken in the Finnish Parliament and law courts, and out with any foreign language. All very patriotic. Only it is well not to forget that what commercial prosperity Finland has to-day is entirely owing to Swedes and other foreigners. The timber trade, which is the life of Finland, is almost entirely under the control of people of foreign origin. Huge tracts of forest land are bought up with the intention of exploiting them in the timber industry. The peasant Finn, without

reasoning the matter, jumps to the conclusion grave injury is being done him, that land which ought to be his gets into the possession of the foreigners, and a sullen anger born of dread encases his heart.

The Finn wants Finland for himself. He loves not to be a toiler for another. He has land-hunger. Give him a piece of land, heavy with scrub and boulders—a stretch which an Englishman would regard as waste—and he will cut down the one and clear the other, build himself a log house, and by scrappy agriculture and fishing will get food for his family.

The dree woefulness of the woods and the black lakes has saturated the Finn. He is not gregarious. He likes his house to be out of sight, and the more buried it is and the further from another house the better is he pleased. He is slow of wit, and not given to much speech, like all men who live in near communion with Nature. When he sings it is a dirge. He ponders.

The young men and young women, straight-limbed, stalwart, the best of Finland, have heard of the United States and Canada, and each month thousands sail down the Baltic, with their hearts in the old forsaken land, but their hopes in the far-off new land. I saw a ship sail. The steerage passengers were all emigrants, fine young folk. Their friends had decked them with flowers, according to the custom of the country; they were shielded and garlanded in bright posies, till hardly any garb was to be seen. As the hawsers hung loose, and the propeller churned, and the big vessel slowly swung

off, they broke into song of love for the mother-land, whilst friends stood on the quay, dim-eyed and quiver-lipped, for the strength of Finland was going away, never to come back.

To provide means to induce young peasant Finns to stay at home is one of the problems for the new Parliament. Peasant proprietorship is the solution agreed upon by all. The Finn is poor and cannot buy. Though something will be done through the agency of state loans, it is clear most land must be given free. Indeed, the peasant has made up his mind the land must be free and become his entirely, that it is an offence to ask him to pay for the ownership of what he is convinced is his right as a Finn. The State owns immense tracts, and a scheme will be framed to give the peasants possession of parts capable of agriculture. But the best sections of Finland are already in private ownership—mostly people of foreign stock. Covetous eyes are cast upon these areas, bought cheaply years ago, and now valuable.

"Made valuable with your labour!" says the Social Democrat to the peasant.

Here broods the second cloud on Finland's serenity. Like all young countries becoming conscious of strength, Finland is tremendously democratic. Problems which have made older countries ache, the young and glib Social Democrats can soon solve!

"Finland for the Finns and equality among all men," is the sort of thing which sounds well from the platform, though it is only the inexperienced

who imagine the possibility of realisation. But it has an effect on the mind of the poor Finn, whose main mental fare is Socialistic literature, which he imperfectly digests. So the great timber merchants, the buyers of forests, the owners of sawmills, the men who have done their share in bringing commercial prosperity to Finland, are regarded as enemies of the country. On Sunday afternoons the red flag is hoisted in many a village, and the doctrine of spoliation is preached by fervid orators.

In the towns, especially in Helsingfors, feeling runs high. When Russia was the enemy White Guards and Red Guards combined. When Russia ceased to be the enemy the Red Guard became Anarchist. "Down with all capitalists," was the creed. The Red Guard, numbering three thousand workmen in Helsingfors, reign by terror, carry revolvers, and shoot at sight. They order strikes and kill resisters. They endeavoured to compel a strike of tramway employees. The frightened police stood on one side. The White Guard went to protect the tram-men, seven of the young fellows were killed, and after death their faces were stamped on with hob-nailed boots. A sorrowing mother was rung up on the telephone. "Oh! a telegram has been received saying your son has safely arrived in hell!" was considered a fine joke. Lying before me as I write is a Red Guard cartoon, satirising the funeral of the young men. To put down the riot the aid of Russian troops from the neighbouring fortress of Sveaborg had to be requisitioned. The Red Guard are now outlawed.

So long as Russia was to be daunted the people of Finland were united and cohesive. Now they have their liberty, and instead of setting about to lay solid foundations for future progress, it is class against class, every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost. There are few men in Finland who do not believe that Finland is on the verge of civil war. A strong man, for the Finns, though stubborn to foes, are amenable to men they trust, would steady the country. At one time dispassionate men looked to Senator Mechelin, sometimes called "the Gladstone of Finland." I had the opportunity of a short talk with him on a steamer bound for Stockholm—a big, grey man, grey-eyed and grey-bearded, imposing in manners, but lacking in decision. His fellow countrymen now smile upon him as a flatterer of the mob, rather than a man who can hold Finland steady while it is getting used to its legs.

Most men recognise that with Finland in a state of anarchy, Russia will have a good excuse for interfering, tearing up the constitution, and again placing Finland under the rod. Moderate men in Finland appreciate that the relationship with Russia is quite satisfactory. They have protection by Russian troops to which they contribute neither a man nor a penny. A natural dread is that if the Finns allow their country to be a hatching place for Russian revolutionary plots, with the communist section taking active part against the Russian Government, disagreeable reprisals will be provoked. General sympathy is with the revolutionary movement, and for

that reason the presence of thousands of Russian soldiery around Helsingfors is not resented. In a mild way they are welcomed, for they are expected to be impressed with the happiness of Finland under the prospect of a constitutional government, and to become advocates for their own country pursuing the same path.

During the 1906 insurrection at Sveaborg, "the Gibraltar of the North"—rocky islands parting Helsingfors, so that the harbour is entered by a fortress-guarded channel—the people of the town watched the struggle between the loyal and disloyal troops—the firing, the cannonading from warships, the explosion of the magazine—with the unconcern of spectators at a melodrama. Sveaborg was well battered. When I saw it, not a window was intact, and cannon-balls had made daylight through many of the buildings. Supping at the Yacht Club I was shown three bullets in the dining-room wall. They were stray shots. The clubmen regarded them good-humouredly, and had a little note beneath, "With the compliments of the Russians."

There is no party in Finland desirous of setting up an independent miniature sovereignty on the plan of Norway. There is, however, some desire for a Republic, on the pattern of Switzerland. The futility of a standing army is recognised. But the country is full of guns and ammunition, brought in under the very nose of Russia, carefully secreted, and ready for civil war in Finland, or for repelling Russia. The Finns would give a good account of themselves in guerilla warfare. The country is nigh

impossible for artillery, and so broken with lake and rapid that it would be difficult to maintain lines of communication. The Finns will not part with their newly acquired constitutional freedom without a fight. But if there is a feud through internal dissensions there is no saying what they may part with.

One Sunday I went to a Lutheran church in the far interior of Finland and listened to a political sermon. The pastor drew a parallel between Judæa under the Romans and Finland under the Russians. His counsel was that the Finns should cease their differences lest they suffer from the invader. It was counsel which the mass of Finns are disposed to neglect.

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PRINTED BY CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED, LA BELLE SAUVAGE, LONDON, E.C.

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